

FREEDOM MOVEMENT
IN
BENGAL

1818—1904

WHO'S WHO

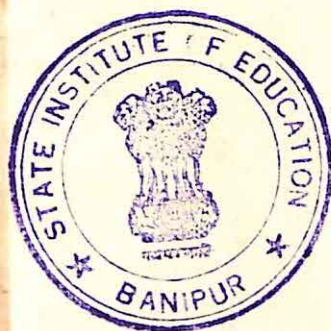
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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

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NIRMAL SINHA, M.A.



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

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Price : Rs. 5/-

Published by the Government of West Bengal under the Government of India scheme for preparation of a Who's Who of those who participated in India's freedom struggle and printed by Sri S. N. Guha Ray at Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd., 32 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road, Calcutta 9

2346



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE	ix
INTRODUCTION	xi
<i>Who's Who</i>	
Roy, Raja Rammohun (1772—1833)	1
Mitra, Tarini Charan (1772—1837)	7
Hare, David (1775—1842)	8
Datta, Rasamay (1779—1854)	13
Deb, Radhakanta (1783—1867)	15
Sen, Ramkamal (1783—1844)	21
Vidyabagish, Ramchandra (1786—1845)	23
Bandyopadhyaya, Bhabani Charan (1787—1848)	25
Tagore, Chandra Kumar (1787—1832)	28
Bandyopadhyaya, Radhamadhab (1787 ?—1852)	30
Ghosh, Ramlochan (1790—1866)	32
Cowasjee, Rustomjee (1792—1852)	34
Seal, Matilal (1792—1854)	36
Tagore, Dwarkanath (1794—1846)	38
Roy Choudhury, Kalinath (1797—1840)	43
Tarkabagish, Gaurisankar (1799—1859)	47
Tagore, Ramanath (1801—1877)	48
Tagore, Prasannacoomar (1801—1868)	51
Deb, Asutosh (1803—1856)	58
Chakrabarti, Tarachand (1804—1855)	60
Mookerjee, Jay Krishna (1808—1888)	65
Deb, Raja Kali Krishna (1808—1874)	66
Derozio, Henry Louis Vivian (1809—1831)	67
Ghosh, Kashiprasad (1809—1873)	71
Deb, Chandrasekhar (1810—1879)	72
Mallick, Rasik Krishna (1810—1858)	75
Deb, Sibchandra (1811—1890)	78
Gupta, Iswar Chandra (1812—1859)	79
Sen, Hari Mohan (1812—?)	82
Tarkabachaspati, Taranath (1812—1885)	84
Banerjea, Krishna Mohan (1813—1885)	85
Sikdar, Radhanath (1813—1870)	93
Lahiri, Ramtanu (1813—1898)	95

Sircar, Shyamacharan Sharma (1814—1882)	.. ..	99
Mitra, Peary Chand (1814—1883)	.. ..	100
Mukherjee, Dakshinaranjan (1814—1878)	.. ..	104
Ghosh, Ramgopal (1815—1868)	.. ..	107
Tagore, Debendranath (1817—1905)	.. ..	111
Mitra, Digambar (1817—1879)	.. ..	118
Roy, Ramaprasad (1817—1862)	.. ..	120
Tarkalankar, Madan Mohan (1817—1858)	.. ..	122
Datta, Rajendra (1818—1889)	.. ..	124
Vidyabhusan, Dwarakanath (1819—1886)	.. ..	125
Datta, Akshay Kumar (1820—1886)	.. ..	129
Vidyasagar, Isvar Chandra (1820—1891)	.. ..	132
Pandit, Sambhunath (1820—1867)	.. ..	141
Mitra, Rajendralal (1822—1891)	.. ..	143
Mitra, Kissory Chand (1822—1873)	.. ..	149
Deb, Maharaja Bahadur Narendra Krishna (1822—1903)	.. ..	153
Laha, Maharaja Durga Charan (1822—1902)	.. ..	156
Chandra, Bholanath (1822—1910)	.. ..	158
Sircar, Peary Charan (1823—1875)	.. ..	160
Dutt, Michael Madhusudan (1824—1873)	.. ..	164
Mukherjee, Harish Chandra (1824—1861)	.. ..	169
Day, Lal Behari (1824—1894)	.. ..	171
Bandyopadhyaya, Nabin Krishna (1824—1896)	.. ..	176
Datta, Sashi Chandra (1824—1885)	.. ..	177
Mukhopadhyaya, Rash Behari (1825—1894)	.. ..	179
Basu, Rajnarayan (1826—1899)	.. ..	181
Mukhopadhyaya, Bhudev (1827—1898)	.. ..	187
Bandyopadhyaya, Rangalal (1827—1887)	.. ..	195
Basu, Kailash Chandra (1827—1878)	.. ..	197
Latif, Nawab Abdul (1828—1893)	.. ..	200
Basu, Bhagaban Chandra (1829—1892)	.. ..	203
Ghosh, Girish Chandra (1829—1869)	.. ..	205
Mitra, Dinabandhu (1830—1873)	.. ..	210
Basu, Manomohan (1831—1912)	.. ..	212
Sircar, Mahendra Lal (1833—1904)	.. ..	214
Majumdar, Harinath (1833—1896)	.. ..	217
Mitra, Dwarakanath (1833—1874)	.. ..	219
Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836—1886)	.. ..	222

Chattopadhyaya, Bankim Chandra (1836—1894)	225
Ghosh, Nabakrishna (1837—?)	236
Majumdar, Girish Chandra (1837—1913)	237
Bandyopadhyaya, Hemchandra (1838—1903)	238
Pal, Kristo Das (1838—1884)	241
Sen, Keshab Chandra (1838—1884)	248
Roy, Govinda Chandra (1838—1917)	255
Mookerjee, Sambhu Chandra (1839—1894)	256
Singha, Kali Prasanna (1840—1870)	262
Tagore, Dwijendranath (1840—1926)	266
Ghosh, Shishir Kumar (1840—1911)	268
Mukhopadhyaya, Pearymohan (1840—1922)	279
Datta, Umesh Chandra (1840—1907)	279
Mitra, Nabagopal (1840?—1894)	280
Mitra, Ramesh Chandra (1840—1899)	285
Das, Durga Mohan (1841—1897)	287
Tagore, Ganendranath (1841—1869)	288
Tagore, Satyendranath (1842—1923)	289
Sen, Guruprasad (1842—1900)	291
Sen, Narendranath (1843—1911)	292
Sen, Baikunthanath (1843—1921)	295
Chattopadhyaya, Nagendranath (1843—1913)	296
Bandyopadhyaya, Gooroodas (1844—1918)	297
Ghosh, Manomohan (1844—1896)	302
Gangopadhyaya, Dwarakanath (1844—1898)	306
Mallick, Jadulal (1844—1894)	311
Mitra, Trailokyanath (1844—1895)	316
Basu, Chandranath (1844—1910)	316
Chunder, Ganesh Chunder (1844—1914)	319
Bonnerjee, Womesh Chunder (1844—1906)	320
Sen, Chandi Charan (1845—1906)	325
Vidyabhusan, Jogendranath (1845—1904)	326
Chattopadhyaya, Nabakanta (1845—1904)	330
Mukhopadhyaya, Rajkrishna (1845—1886)	331
Bandyopadhyaya, Tarapada (1845?—1907)	333
Sircar, Akshay Chandra (1846—1917)	334
Datta, Jogesh Chandra (1847—?)	336
Sastri, Sivanath (1847—1919)	338

Banerjee, Kali Charan (1847—1907)	343
Sen, Nabin Chandra (1847—1909)	344
Basu, Ananda Mohan (1847—1906)	349
Ghosh, Moti Lal (1847—1922)	355
Dutt, Romesh Chunder (1848—1909)	359
Banerjea, Surendranath (1848—1925)	371
Tagore, Jyotirindranath (1849—1925)	379
Bandyopadhyaya, Indranath (1849—1911)	383
Gupta, Rajani Kanta (1849—1900)	384
Roy, Rajkrishna (1849—1894)	388
Roy, Rajaninath (1849—1902)	390
Ghosh, Lal Mohan (1849—1909)	391
Mitra, Krishna Kumar (1852—1936)	394
Basu, Girish Chandra (1853—1939)	402
Ghosh, Nagendra Nath (1854—1909)	404
Basu, Jogendra Chandra (1854—1905)	405
Mitra, Ananda Chandra (1854—1903)	409
Das, Govinda Chandra (1855—1918)	410
Basu, Pramatha Nath (1855—1934)	411
Swarnakumari Debi (1855—1932)	417
Heroes of the Santal Rebellion (1855)	419
Datta, Aswini Kumar (1856—1923)	423
Chattopadhyaya, Sitalakanta (1856—1897)	427
Pal Chaudhury, Bipradas (1857—1914)	428
Pal, Bipin Chandra (1858—1932)	429
Chaudhuri, Asutosh (1860—1924)	436
Heroes of the Indigo Disturbances (1860—1880)	438
Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab (1861—1907)	448
Maitra, Akshay Kumar (1861—1930)	452
Tagore, Rabindranath (1861—1941)	454
Kavyabisharad, Kaliprasanna (1861—1907)	461
Gangopadhyaya, Kadambini (1862—1923)	465
Swami Vivekananda (1863—1902)	466
Roy, Dwijendra Lal (1863—1913)	474
Chaudhuri, Jogesh Chandra (1864—1951)	476
Basu, Dwijendranath (1865—1921)	477
Ray, Nikhilmath (1865—1932)	478
Deb Bahadur, Raja Binay Krishna (1866—1912)	479

	<i>Page</i>
Deushkar, Sakharam Ganesh (1869—1912)	481
Roy, Rama Kanta (1873—1906)	483
Sen, Nalini Kanta (1878?—1901)	486



2346



PREFACE

The present volume of "Who's Who" of persons in Bengal, "who took part in the struggle for India's freedom relating to the period from 1818 to 1904", was prepared on the advice of the Who's Who Committee, often referred to as the Historians' Committee, set up by the Education Department of the Government of West Bengal under its Resolution No. 1514-Edn(G), dated 4th May, 1964.

It was decided at a discussion, presided over by the late Rai Harendranath Chaudhuri, former Minister of Education of West Bengal, that the work to be done under the guidance of the Committee should take the form of a historical study rather than a directory of Who's Who of persons. It was further decided that, in the absence of political sufferers in Bengal during the period under study, the work of compilation would be based upon a historical analysis of the activities of individuals in relation to the creation and promotion of an urge for freedom in its broadest sense in society. It was to be freedom from all restraints—social, religious, economic and political. Or, in other words, it was to be freedom not only from the built-in restraints of society, but also from the restraints imposed on Indians by the British Government. Besides, mental awakening, preceding the spread of the urge for freedom among the people, had to be given an important place in the scheme of the whole work.

It must be unreservedly recorded here that the entire work of compilation and editing has been done by Sri Nirmal Sinha, Research Scholar and Compiler to the Committee. He has done the Introduction as well. His scholarship and industry deserve unqualified commendation.

After the inaugural meeting of 29 June 1964, the Committee held four more meetings (14 January and 5 December 1965, 3 September and 18 December 1966) to review the progress of the work done by Sri Sinha. At the last meeting of the Committee on 18 December 1966, members offered their suggestions for improving the Introduction. I am grateful to them for cooperating with me in seeing the work through.

We are grateful to Swami Ranganathananda for accommodating our Office in the building of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture from January 1965 to March 1967.

I offer thanks to Sri Akshay Kumar Sen Sarma, Bengali Translator to the Government of West Bengal, for placing at the disposal

of Sri Sinha all the Confidential Annual and Weekly Reports on Vernacular Newspapers preserved in his Office. Thanks are also due to Sri Tarit Kumar Mukherjee, Assistant Director of State Archives, for allowing Sri Sinha to consult the papers both in the Archives and in the Records. Lastly, thanks are offered to Sri Amiya Bhusan Roy (Senior Technical Assistant) and Sri Gaur Hari Saha (Reference, Assistant) of the West Bengal Secretariat Library for ungrudgingly helping Sri Sinha in his investigations.

Calcutta,
March 27, 1967

NARENDRA KRISHNA SINHA
Chairman

POSTSCRIPT

I also wish to thank Professor Kalyan Kumar Sen of Narasinha Dutta College, Howrah, for helping Sri Nirmal Sinha prepare the index. To enable readers to find out without much effort the names of lesser known patriots also who come within the purview of discussion in connection with the activities of the major personalities constituting the "Who's Who", an index of the names of persons only is given in the book.

I must thank Sri Nirmal Sinha not only for seeing the work through the press but also for ungrudgingly performing, in the midst of his pressing duties elsewhere, the tedious task of reading the proofs, ably assisted by Sri Nibaran Chandra Biswas, formerly in charge of the Reading Department of Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd.

Lastly, I must also thank Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd., particularly Sri Mihir Kiron Das, Asst. Sales Manager, for expediting the printing of the work.

Calcutta,
August 15, 1968

NARENDRA KRISHNA SINHA

2346

INTRODUCTION

This work is an attempt at analysing the contributions of individuals towards the steady development of an urge for freedom in every sphere of life in Bengal in the nineteenth century. The matrix within which this urge developed was shaped by ideas and efforts of individuals, who realized that the spread of political consciousness among their countrymen must be preceded by the regeneration of society. By promoting the cause of mental and social progress in the country they succeeded in creating among the enlightened an increasing awareness not only of the deprivation of their political rights, but also of their economic exploitation under British rule. So, during the period under study the development of the process of regeneration can be seen side by side with the multiplication of means, including the agitational method, for righting the wrongs done to the Indian body politic and obtaining political rights from the British in keeping with the growing political consciousness in the country.

SCOPE

Technically, the scope of this work, as fixed by the State Government, is from Regulation III of 1818 to 1904. Regulation III of 7 April 1818, which was "a Regulation for the confinement of State prisoners", provided for detention without trial of individuals against whom there might not be "sufficient ground to institute any judicial proceeding" (cf. The Regulations of the Government of Fort William in Bengal by Richard Clarke, Vol. II). In this context, reference to this Regulation may predispose many to the view that this work is or should be an account of Bengal's freedom-fighters, who were placed under personal restraint, that is detained in prison without trial, for "the preservation of the tranquillity in the territories of the Native States and for the security of the British dominions from foreign hostility and from fear of internal commotion". As a matter of fact, had this been the determinant of our work, there would practically have been nothing to write about regarding the history of the struggle for freedom during the period in question. It was not until 1908 that the first batch of nine political agitators (Aswini Kumar Datta, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Manoranjan Guha Thakurta, 'Raja' Subodh Chandra Mallick, Satish Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Pulin Behari Das, Shyam Sundar Chakrabarty, Bhupesh

furthered by Rammohun Roy and David Hare as well as by the School Book Society founded in 1817, led many well-to-do progressives (including the Young Bengal group) to establish English schools and libraries both in Calcutta and the mofussil with a view to equipping students with knowledge, which would help them to revitalize society by freeing it from the divisive and enervating influence of the irrational customs and traditions of the past. Many men felt that Hindus could regenerate society much earlier than expected if they could see their way to spending money, not on the performance of *sraddh* and marriage ceremonies, but for founding useful English schools in the country. As a matter of fact, the spread of English education, which was formally approved of by the majority decision of the Anglicists in the General Committee of Public Instruction on 17 March 1835, opened up new vistas of knowledge for the youths of Bengal.

Not merely Western literature, but Western science also came to be seriously cultivated by the students. Encouraged by the progressives, young men, ignoring orthodox opposition, entered the Medical College, which was founded on 1 June 1835. There was a growing interest in vocational education, and attempts, though spasmodic, were made by some to set up technical institutions (e.g., The Calcutta Mechanics' Institute founded in 1839). It was, however, not till the end of the nineteenth century that sustained efforts were made to tackle in an earnest manner the problem of imparting technical education to young men in the larger interests of society. Some studied law and earned eminence not only as lawyers but also as social reformers and critics of the administration.

Teachers did not confine their activities to teaching in the classroom alone. They encouraged their pupils to participate in debates and to discuss every problem with the help of reason. Derozio's Academic Association, for instance, functioned as the hot-house of reason for them. They delighted in condemning social and religious customs which failed to pass the test of reason. They flung aside all traditional restraints on their freedom of thought and acted according to the dictates of their conscience or reason. This group of young men, known in history as Young Bengal or Young Calcutta, included such personalities as Tarachand Chakrabarti, Krishna Mohan Banerjea, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Ramgopal Ghosh, Ramtanu Lahiri, Peary Chand Mitra, Kissorsy Chand Mitra and Kashiprasad Ghosh. English education fostered a spirit of enquiry among them and made them intolerant of all kinds of

unreasonable restraints, social, administrative and political. Tarachand Chakrabarti, their most vocal spokesman, held that the essential function of a good government was to provide education to the people, and not merely to collect revenue for the maintenance of its police and magistracy. The activities of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge founded in 1838 and the Bengal British India Society founded in 1843 reflected both this new spirit of enquiry and intolerance of restraints. It was awareness of the growth of this new spirit that prompted Dwarkanath Tagore to express in his Town Hall speech of 18 June 1836 that with the spread of English education through the Hindu College, the attendance of young men at political meetings would steadily increase.

Original thinking in speech and writing was encouraged among students by dedicated teachers, one of whom was Lal Behari Day. He hated 'note-makers', who were responsible for parrotry among a section of students, and went to the length of suggesting that these 'note-makers' should be deported to the Andamans.

It should also be noted that by their exemplary probity and boldness of thought and action, teachers like Ramtanu Lahiri, Rajnarayan Basu and Peary Charan Sircar, among many others, became character-builders and harbingers of a new student-community, throbbing with a lively sense of freedom, yet not irreligious or disrespectful towards the wholesome ingredients of their rich heritage and culture. They, unlike some of the Young Bengal group, kept themselves within the limits of decency without sacrificing their independence of mind.

If the spread of English education gave an impetus to social reform, it also awakened among its beneficiaries the desire to stand on a footing of equality with Europeans in India. This was seen in their increasingly clamant demands for responsible posts in the judiciary and administration of the country, for the freedom of the Press, for the association of Indians with the jury system as well as for its expansion in the country, for the equality of Indians and Europeans in the eye of the law, for local self-government, for legislative Councils with Indians in the majority, for the introduction of the elective principle in Councils and municipalities and for other rights which were enjoyed by free peoples in the West.

The Government also, both in deference to the aspirations of the English-educated and under pressure of circumstances, threw open to them, first, the doors of the Subordinate Executive Services (Deputy

Collectorship in 1833 and Deputy Magistrateship in 1843) and, then, those of the Covenanted Civil Service itself under the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861. And the success of the first Bengalee candidate, Satyendranath Tagore, at the Civil Service Examination of 1863 gave new heart to Indians and encouraged them to feel that they were in no way inferior to the educated Englishmen.

Fears of the ruling authorities about the results of spreading higher education became pronounced after the Sepoy Mutiny. That was why, as pointed out by Girish Chandra Ghosh, the Civil Finance Commission of 1861 suggested a drastic reduction in Government expenditure on colleges. Subsequently, the success of Indians in the Covenanted Civil Service Examination in London, which lent substance to their countrymen's demand for more rights and larger accommodation in all the Services under the Crown, led Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to adopt the retrograde policy of retrenching Government expenditure on higher education in colleges on the plea of the Government's desire to spend more on primary education for the masses. Though the policy of retrenchment had ultimately to be given up under pressure of public opinion, Government, particularly during Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty, was always on the look out for opportunities to bring higher education, considered to be the mother of sedition and of a spirit of opposition, under its control. The Universities Act of 1904, which placed the University of Calcutta under bureaucratic control to the utter disgust of the Bengalee intelligentsia, and the Risley and Carlyle Circulars of the Bengal Government in 1905, which were aimed at expelling students from colleges for their participation in the *Swadeshi* movement or anti-Partition agitation, reflected the Government's eagerness to combat the growing anti-British attitude among the Bengalee youths under the influence of higher English education.

(b) THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

If English education made many of its recipients (e.g., Tarachand Chakrabarti, Debendranath Tagore, Romesh Chunder Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya) patriotic lovers of their country and its language and literature, it also turned many among Young Bengal not only into scoffers of their own language and culture, but also into slavish imitators of European manners and customs. Their immoderation alarmed both the educated conservatives and the rational-minded progressives. And this alarm increased as a result of the

growing influence of the Christian missionaries over young students in their schools.

Fears about the results of English education led to the initiation of a concerted endeavour on the part of the national-minded Bengalees to spread education through the vernacular. In 1823, the *Gaudiya Samaj* bound together the conservatives and the progressives (e.g., Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Ramkamal Sen, Rasamay Datta, Tarini Charan Mitra) in the common endeavour to further the spread of knowledge through the vernacular and to revive the study of the *Sastras* and ancient books on science. Radhakanta Deb, who helped the School Book Society to spread English education among the poor children, was one of the leading spirits of this Samaj, the proceedings of which were carried on in Bengali.

The *Sarbatattwadipika Sabha*, established in 1832 by Debendranath Tagore and Ramaprasad Roy, both pupils of the Anglo-Hindu School, encouraged students to organize and participate in debates in Bengali. They wanted their friends to understand that English should not be cultivated to the neglect of the vernacular tongue, which alone could become the most suitable medium of expression of original thought for Bengalees. Subsequently, the writings of Akshay Kumar Datta, the trusted lieutenant of Debendranath Tagore, showed to what heights of originality and effective expression thinking in Bengali was capable of rising.

Because of increasing missionary influence, with Government connivance, as well as of the replacement of the use of Persian by Bengali in court proceedings from 1839 under Act XXIX of 1837 and Act XII of 1843, Prasannacoomar Tagore, whose aversion for the missionaries was well known, took the lead in founding the Hindu College Pathsala on 14 June 1839 with a view to providing "a system of National Education" and to instructing "Hindoo youths in Literature and in the Sciences of India and Europe through the medium of the Bengalee language" (General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843-44). He proposed the publication of special textbooks in Bengali. But no progress could be made in this direction after 1841 because of the Government's insistence that textbooks in English, duly censored and approved by the General Committee of Public Instruction, could only be translated into Bengali.

The system of Bengali instruction in the Hindu College was

imperfect. In 1843, the Report from the Hindu College Management, signed by Prasannacoomar Tagore and J. C. C. Sutherland, to the Council of Education stated: "The attainments of the examined boys of the Hindoo College in Bengalee were very indifferent. . . . On the other hand, the examined boys of the Patshala read with fluency and explained with accuracy, and appeared well-grounded in Grammar as far as they had read". Thus, the Report recommended that no candidate, whose age was not eight or more, be admitted unless he could "fluently read the *Nibhi Kotha*, or Æsop's Fables, and write from a copy"; that the time devoted to writing and reading Bengali in the Junior Department be increased; that Bengali teachers whose classes were "ill-taught be removed after warning"; and that diligent teachers be encouraged by increase of salary (General Report on Public Instruction. . . . for 1843-44). Unfortunately, however, this Report on encouraging vernacular studies was not accepted by the Council of Education.

Prasannacoomar Tagore wanted Bengalee youths, qualified in the English arts and sciences, to be trained in the combined duties of authors and teachers. Probably with Ramchandra Vidyabagish, a teacher at the *Pathshala*, as his model, he expressed his preference for those who possessed a good knowledge of Sanskrit, in addition to English. It would be easier for such trained teachers, he felt, not only "to express their newly acquired ideas through the vernacular language", but also to translate useful English works into Bengali, which might eventually lead to the establishment of "a permanent system of national education" (see Appendix L, Report of the General Committee of Public Instruction of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal for the year 1839-40).

Though the lofty purpose behind Prasannacoomar's scheme came to be thwarted by Government opposition, it showed to what extent leaders of Bengali society were exercised over the Government's system of education which, by emphasizing the study of English, discouraged the younger generation from cultivating their mother tongue and making it a powerful vehicle of spreading all manner of knowledge, including that of their great cultural heritage, for the much-needed social and political regeneration of the country.

A fresh attempt was made by the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*, under the able guidance of Debendranath Tagore, to spread knowledge in the vernacular and to revive the study of the *Shastras* with a view to counteracting the influence of the Christian missionaries. Inspired

by visions of a resuscitated national culture through a national system of education, the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* founded the *Tattwabodhini Pathshala* in 1840. Its inspiring genius, however, was Askhay Kumar Datta, who could never reconcile himself to the cultural or spiritual enslavement of Bengalee youths to the West. But, unfortunately, the *Pathshala* languished for want of public support and funds, and passed out of existence by 1848.

Nevertheless, opposition to proselytization, which was accentuated by certain unhappy incidents at the Hindu College in 1848, led the leaders of both the orthodox and the progressive camps to collaborate in establishing, first, the Hindu Charitable Institution (*Hindu Hitarthi*) in March 1846 and, then, the Hindu Metropolitan College in 1853, both shortlived but tremendously effective in drawing public attention to the need of having institutions free from Government control and conducive to the growth of a feeling of nationality and a sense of self-reliance among the educated Bengalees.

Patriotic Bengalees increasingly realized that there was no justification on the part of their countrymen to neglect the vernacular out of their false pride in English learning, however inadequate or meagre it might be. Rajnarayan Basu, one of the earliest apostles of nationalism in the country, hated to see English-educated Bengalees lard their vernacular speech with English words. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya also condemned this habit in the most unmistakable terms. He emphatically stated that Bengalees must use the vernacular not only at all meetings but also whenever conversing with one another. This would help the transmission of useful and invigorating ideas from the educated community to the masses to whom English words were unintelligible. Bengali alone, he held, could be the medium of mass education in Bengal. Moreover, the spread of mass education through the vernacular alone could bring about mass awakening, without which no agitation for political or social reform in Bengal was capable of achieving any substantial success. To teach English to the children of the peasants in the name of mass education, pointed out Radhakanta Deb as early as 1859, was a ruinous policy, for it tended to wean them from "the plough, the axe and the loom" and to make them hanker after clerkships (see Rajnarayan Basu also).

When the flexibility, elegance and richness of the Bengali language came to be established by the writings of men like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Rajani Kanta Gupta, Akshay Kumar Maitra,

Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Hem Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, Rangalal Bandyopadhyaya, Nabin Chandra Sen, Rabindranath Tagore, national-minded Bengalees (e.g., Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya), proud of their mother tongue, demanded that the teaching of Bengali be introduced at all levels of study under the University of Calcutta. The role played by the founders of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* in this matter since 1894 was inspiring. However, their advocacy of the dissemination of knowledge through the vernacular did not imply neglect of the cultivation of the English language, though many of them were aware that those who wrote in English to project Indian thought and grievances to Europeans would be forgotten by their own countrymen, while their hearts would enshrine the memory of those only who left enduring literature in Bengali. Thus, to some of them, the duty of writing in English was a great sacrifice necessary for the sake of the 'Fatherland' (see Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee).

The main purposes of national education began to be held up in clearer perspective by thinkers from the eighteen-seventies. Rajnarayan Basu said in 1875 that education must help breed self-reliance among its recipients. Even English education, he said, would be considered to have done its recipients good if they were able to establish colleges on their own, to initiate a system of female education without looking to Christian women for help, to write poems and novels reflecting the genius of the land, to carry on scientific research independently, to make discoveries and inventions by their own efforts, to cease to be dependent on the British Government's favour for the removal of their wants. Needless to say, it was this purpose—the purpose to use education, free from the stifling control and influence of the Government, for the benefit of the country—that supplied the motive force to those whose thought and planning facilitated the establishment of the National Council of Education in Bengal in 1906.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two other purposes of education came to be emphasized in the interest of national regeneration. First, education, according to Swami Vivekananda, had to be character-building education. He wanted education to be imparted with an eye to the spiritual values of life, without, however, neglecting the interests of material progress. It must make its recipients love even the humblest among their countrymen, develop self-confidence and a spirit of sacrifice as well as to be respectful towards the dignity of labour. While imbibing this education, the study of the *Upanishads*—the watchword of which was freedom—must not be neglected.

Secondly, like Nabagopal Mitra, the organizer of the National School founded in April 1872, Dwarakanath Vidhyabhusan and Swami Vivekananda also wanted every young man to develop his brawn side by side with his brain. Under their influence many young men seriously took to physical culture, which subsequently became an important item in the *Anusilan Samity's* programme of training for its members, all dedicated to the cause of liberating the motherland from British rule.

(c) WOMEN'S EDUCATION

The majority of the leaders in society seriously addressed themselves to the task of spreading education among women with a view to emancipating them from their social bondage and making them useful to the cause of social regeneration. If Rammohun Roy espoused the cause of the basic rights of women, Radhakanta Deb, the leader of the orthodox section, boldly came forward to promote the cause of female education, with its emphasis on vocational training, by associating himself publicly with the activities of the Calcutta School Society established in 1818.

When the Bethune School for girls came to be established in May 1849, it received active help and cooperation from many leaders of society, including Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Radhakanta Deb, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. Both the orthodox and progressive leaders cooperated to make the venture a success. Given opportunities, Chandramukhi Basu and Kadambini Gangopadhyaya amply proved by their accomplishments what women could achieve in the academic field as well as in public life.

Spreading education among women was the problem, no matter whether it was imparted at home or in school. Keshab Chandra Sen opened a Female Normal School to train up women as teachers who could enter the inner apartments in homes to educate women accustomed to living in seclusion. Girish Chandra Ghosh, aware of the traditional shyness of unmarried women to come out in the open to earn their livelihood, suggested that widows be trained as teachers.

The Brahmo progressives, e.g., Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya, Sivanath Sastri and Durga Mohan Das, wanted higher education for women in Keshab Chandra Sen's *Bharat Asram*. Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, particularly, opened girls' schools in Calcutta, a task in which he was wholeheartedly assisted by Durga Mohan Das, Manomohan Ghosh and Miss Acroyd.

Apart from imparting general education, it was felt that girls should be taught dancing as was done in the past. Kailash Chandra Basu, speaking before the Bengal Social Science Association, which was established by Miss Carpenter in 1867, strongly advocated this proposal. He felt that this ancient art of the country would die if social prejudice was allowed to prevent the release and harnessing of creative female energy to it.

To teach self-help to girls of the labouring class, Peary Charan Sircar helped them to learn not only reading, writing and arithmetic in Bengali, but also to gain proficiency in vocational work. Swarnakumari Devi went a step further in this direction by establishing the *Sakhi Samiti* in 1886, which endeavoured not only to acquaint women with the means of becoming self-reliant, but also to encourage them to take an increasing interest in all kinds of national activities.

The grip of social prejudice, which kept women in ignorance, was slowly opened by this lever of female education. Educated women, though very few in number in the nineteenth century, led the movement of female emancipation, actively helped by the social reformers. And the participation of women delegates in the deliberations of the Congress session in Calcutta in 1890 added depth to the growing urge for freedom in the country.

(d) SOCIAL REGENERATION

Throughout the nineteenth century there was an unremitting endeavour on the part of the liberals to free Hindu society from the paralysing stranglehold of customs which had long outlived their utility. These customs kept people, particularly women, steeped in ignorance and superstition, and helped the maintenance of a system of social tyranny unparalleled in the world. Customs such as *sati*, polygamy, child marriage which not unoften led to early widowhood for women, the *purdah* or keeping women in seclusion, shut off from all sources of enlightenment, created a murky atmosphere in society that was decadent and impervious to the light of liberalism as well as of freedom. The caste system, with its concomitant of untouchability, kept society divided and weak.

The rising tide of rationalism that came in the wake of the spread of English education slowly began to wash away the antiquated and irrational customs, which for centuries had kept the springs of national life choked and useless. The abolition of the *sati* custom was the beginning of the process which gradually introduced more and more

freedom for women from social tyranny in Bengal. What was begun by Rammohun Roy in this direction was carried on by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Debendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen and a host of other reformers. Widow remarriage was made permissible by law in 1856, and public leaders, overcoming all fear of social obloquy, boldly came forward to sponsor widow remarriages.

The progressive Brahmos wanted to introduce greater social freedom through the abolition of all caste distinctions in matters relating to dining and marriage. Intercaste marriage was encouraged by them. Interestingly enough, Swami Vivekananda advocated social cohesion and national regeneration through the same means. The continuance of the practice of untouchability, the bane of Hindu society, provoked him into saying that Hindus had driven their religion down to the kitchen.

To come back to the Brahmos, they not only condemned early marriage but also discarded it. The Brahmo Marriage Act of 1872 was an eloquent testimony to their desire to rationalize the institution of marriage.

The progressive followers of Keshab Chandra Sen held that women should be treated on a footing of equality with men. They overcame Keshab Chandra's opposition in their endeavour to make Brahmo ladies, who used to hear sermons from behind the *purdah*, sit side by side with men in the prayer hall of the *Brahmo Samaj*.

Swami Vivekananda wanted social equality for national regeneration through the abandonment of untouchability, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya wanted it for the attainment of all other kinds of equality. It was vernacular education alone, held Bankim Chandra, that could encourage both women and the peasant masses to endeavour consciously to break down the customary barriers standing in the way of the attainment of social equality. For better understanding between individuals in society, Bengalees of all ranks were asked to use the mother tongue only whenever conversing with one another. This was bound to lead to social cohesion, which was indispensable to any concerted endeavour for freeing society from all forms of exploitation and alien domination.

Theism or the unity of the Godhead, as propagated by Rammohun Roy, Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen, and the universal brotherhood of man, as preached by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, tended to promote social cohesion by removing, as far as it was practicable, the divisive influence of religion.

An attempt was also made to promote a sense of belonging among the Bengalees. This was done by the patriotic-minded leaders through their denunciation of the habit of aping European manners, customs and dress by the English-educated. Reformers, educationists, poets, novelists, all unequivocally condemned this habit, which helped the 'spiritual enslavement' of educated Indians by England. Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya was forthright in saying that "if the tailor be the high priest of the regenerative ceremony of India", then far be such regeneration from him and his countrymen. "We are we and they are they"—these words eloquently expressed Shishir Kumar Ghosh's aversion for Anglicization. Social regeneration had to bear a national stamp—the impress of national culture without which the image of Mother India was sure to be mistaken in course of time, under the unwholesome influence of Anglicization, for a poor reflection of the image of Britain.

By holding up the lofty ideas of Hindu culture before the educated and by creating a fairly widespread feeling of revulsion against Anglicization, nationalists like Rajnarayan Basu, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Nabagopal Mitra succeeded in promoting among them a sense of belonging—a sense of identification with the true interests of society. Needless to say, this sense of belonging was necessary for fostering the feeling of nationality in the country.

Widespread hostility towards proselytization and Anglicization, combined with the orthodox group's opposition to the British Government's policy of interference with the religious customs of the Hindus, succeeded in creating not only an anti-British feeling but also a sense of nationality, without which the urge for freedom would have remained confined to the hearts of a few individuals only. This anti-British feeling, stemming at the beginning from orthodox opposition to the Sati Regulation of 1829, came to be accentuated by the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 and the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, both of which, it should be noted, were passed in the teeth of vehement public opposition. Rabindranath Tagore pointed out that the Age of Consent Bill was unnecessary, since changing economic conditions would force young men to avoid early marriage.

To Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan, the true remedy of social evil lay in mass education rather than in Government legislation. He feared that once Government interference was tolerated in social evils, it might operate in such a way as to deprive the people of all control over their social life.

What is of interest to note is the fact that Hindus came to be stirred out of their apathy towards social problems not only by the reforming endeavour of Rammohun Roy and his coadjutors like Dwarkanath Tagore and Kalinath Roy Choudhury, but also by the vocal opposition to reform offered by Radhakanta Deb and his supporters like Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyaya and Tarini Charan Mitra. This process of awakening involved in the tussle between the pro-reform group and the anti-reform group went on throughout the nineteenth century.

The educated orthodox, it must be clearly understood, were not all hidebound conservatives. At a time when crossing the seas was considered a sin, Radhakanta Deb, the leader of the orthodox group, was glad to join hands with any England-returned Bengalee who was inclined to use his knowledge for the good of society. New winds had begun not only to blow away the cobwebs of antiquities from inside the social structure, but also to erode the hard shell of orthodoxy which had long kept imprisoned the truly liberal spirit of India.

This liberal spirit had been very much evident in such social activities as founding academic institutions and charitable dispensaries. There was a spirit of social service behind these activities. Swami Vivekananda exhorted his countrymen to broaden this spirit and work selflessly for the uplift of the masses. To hold down the masses to grinding poverty in the name of religion or to keep them at a distance in the name of the caste system was a social crime. Without mass awakening, contended Swamiji, there could be no genuine and all-round progress in society.

(e) PROTESTS AGAINST EXPLOITATION:

NEW ECONOMIC ENDEAVOUR

Exploitation of India's resources, with the consequent impoverishment and the rapid decline of indigenous industries, was one of the chief features of British rule.

Rammohun Roy was the first man to raise his voice of protest in England against the rack-renting of ryots. He suggested a reduction in the revenue to relieve the burden on the zamindars and their ryots. This reduction would not affect the fiscal interests of the Government if low-salaried Indian Collectors were employed instead of highly-paid Europeans. No heed was paid to this plea, since it was the considered policy of the Government to add to the revenue by any means. Rightly did Mr. George Thompson say, in course of his speech

on Police Reform at Srikrishna Singh's Maniktala Garden-House on 27 February 1843, that the revenue was "the Alpha and Omega" of British desires and that the police constituted the best instrument of collecting taxes.

The decision to resume rent-free lands (*lakhiraj*) under Regulation III of 1828 was very revealing in so far as the Government's ill-concealed desire to have more revenue was concerned. Rumblings of zamindars' discontent were first heard at their *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha* founded in 1836. In 1838, the zamindars again came together in the Landholders' Society and carried on an agitation until the Government agreed to exempt from assessment rent-free lands measuring less than fifty *bighas* for every zamindar. It benefited the zamindars but not the ryots.

The poor ryots were subjected to all manner of oppression. They could not manufacture their own salt from saline earth, because Government prohibited it in every zamindari. This prohibition, against which Debendranath Tagore as Secretary of the British Indian Association protested, showed how callous the Government was to the needs of the ryots who lived from hand to mouth.

The maximum oppression on the ryots was practised by the European indigo planters, who were described by Rajendralal Mitra in 1857 as "the sweepings of England". Writing in March 1825, Bishop Heber remarked that their oppressive conduct had done much in lowering "English character in native eyes". European officers in the districts offered both overt and covert protection to the planters. Ryots, instead of obtaining redress of their grievances in courts of law, were so harassed by the district officers that they had no other choice than to submit to planters' exploitation. Restive and disaffected, they ceased work for the planters when they heard of the Baraset Magistrate's *rubakari* of 20 February 1859, which made sowing indigo on their part optional (see Nawab Abdul Latif). They rose up like one man in protest against the system, which was made more oppressive by the planters under Act XI of 1860. It gave rise to a dangerous situation in the indigo-growing districts of Nadia, Jessore and the 24-Parganas. Their 'cease-work' movement was given direction and edge by Shishir Kumar Ghosh, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Girish Chandra Ghosh and Dinabandhu Mitra. The report of the Indigo Commission (1860) testifies to the courageous protest of many ryots and some zamindars as well, who sought freedom from exploitation and oppression. Behind the recrudescence of the indigo

trouble in the northern part of Jessore in the eighteen-seventies was the same urge of the ryots for freedom from exploitation. The most prominent among the local people who championed their cause was Jadunath Majumdar, who was appointed a member of the Three-man Commission directed to inquire into the causes of the trouble.

When the ryots moved on from passive resistance to open defiance of the planters, the latter found it difficult to continue in their oppresssive endeavour, to which the death-blow was subsequently struck by the German discovery of aniline, a substitute for the indigo dye.

This same spirit of defiance bordering on rebellion was shown by the brave-hearted Santals in 1855-56, who left a bloody trail in history in their quest of freedom from moneylenders' oppression and exploitation, which was rendered unbearable by administrative indifference.

The planters' oppression on the indentured labour in the tea gardens of North Bengal and Assam drew forth protests from many leaders like Kristo Das Pal, Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Ananda Mohan Basu, Mahendra Lal Sircar and Bipin Chandra Pal. Because the Madras Congress of 1887 treated this oppression as a provincial affair, the Bengal Provincial Conference in Calcutta in 1888 took it up in right earnest and set on foot an agitation through the press, which caused much uneasiness to the ruling authorities.

Vehement protests against the studied policy of the Government to promote the sale of Manchester cloth in India at the cost of the indigenous textile industry, particularly in the days of Lord Lytton and Lord Elgin, showed to what extent leaders of Bengal became aware of Britain's policy of exploiting and draining their country of its wealth. In 1878, Maharaja Narendra Krishna Deb led a deputation of the British Indian Association, including Narendranath Sen, to present a memorial to Lord Lytton at Government House, requesting him not to yield to the demand of the Manchester merchants for the abolition of import duties on their cotton goods exported to India. It was a vain request. The memorial, with its polite reference to the Afghan War and the Licence Tax of 1878, provoked Lord Lytton into reprimanding the deputation in such a way as to send a wave of indignation all over the country. He refused to see any reason in the deputationists' contention that free trade was prejudicial to the interest of the nascent textile industry of India.

What added to popular indignation at this time was the levy of Rs. 2 as tax on an annual income less than Rs. 300 under the Licence Tax Act of 1878. The deputationists' fear that Government might try to make up the loss in revenue (about Rs. 20 lakhs annually), caused by the abolition of import duties, by imposing fresh taxes on the impoverished people was coming true to their alarm.

In 1894, Lord Elgin's imposition of an excise duty of 5 per cent on Indian manufactured yarns "of the counts 20's or above" created a deep feeling of resentment among Indians towards the British Government. The decision to levy this countervailing excise duty on Indian yarns was taken after the Government had imposed, with a view to balancing its budget, an import duty on Manchester textile goods (see Rabindranath Tagore). Some members of the Viceroy's Council, including Mohini Mohan Roy and Fazulbhai Vishram, pointed out that the Government could expect very little revenue from the proposed countervailing excise duty. Indian agitators prayed in vain for exemption from duty of Indian yarn up to a count of 24.

The unnecessary expenditure incurred by the Government in its annual exodus to the hills and the extravagance of the Delhi Darbars were painful spectacles to leaders of Bengal who could never reconcile themselves either to the income-tax of 1861 or to the licence tax of 1878 or to the Government's indifference to the condition of famine-stricken peasants. The severe criticism to which the Government's extravagance, as well as its indifference to the economic condition of the people, was subjected in the 'native' journals created a strong anti-British feeling all over the country. Informed public opinion in the country became sharply critical of the British imperial policy of discriminatory exploitation when Dadabhai Naoroji, Romesh Chunder Dutt and later Sakham Ganesh Deushkar boldly drew the attention of all to the shameless manner in which Britain drained India of her wealth.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century leaders of Bengal increasingly realized that they must learn to be self-reliant if they wanted to effect the economic regeneration of their country. The efforts of Dwarkanath Tagore in promoting Bengali banking and joint-stock business blazed a new trail for his fallen countrymen to follow. What Bengalees needed for their economic regeneration, as pointed out by the *Gyananneshun* (9 August 1834) and the *Samachar Chundrika* (9 February 1833), was Dwarkanath's spirit of enter-

prise, which should encourage them to take increasingly to business and commerce.

It is interesting to note that Rammohun Roy's advocacy of allowing English farmers and capital to come to India for effecting her economic improvement came to be bitterly opposed by many in the country. In 1825, Bishop Heber's awareness of the oppressive conduct of the European indigo planters in Bengal as well as of "the general conduct of the lower order of Europeans in India" led him not only to deprecate the idea of "free colonization" by them, but also to wish that their number did not increase. The opposition of the educated orthodox to this idea was clearly reflected in Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyaya's inspiring call to the zamindars to prevent European colonization of the country by investing their wealth in land and industries. As a matter of fact, Radhamadhab Bandyopadhyaya and his orthodox friends set up a society in 1818 to clear jungles in the Gangasagar Island and prepare its soil for cotton cultivation. Unfortunately, however patriotic its motive might have been, the society was not able to achieve anything. Then, again in 1833, both the progressives and the orthodox, in cooperation with a few Europeans, tried to launch the New Bengal Steam Fund Committee's scheme of steamship navigation between Europe and India, but it failed to materialize.

To promote a spirit of combination in the countryside, Chandra-nath Basu suggested the spread of mass education among the peasants. He made it clear that without this spirit it would be impossible to effect any change in the economy of agriculture.

Though most of the Bengalee banks and business firms had to be closed down by 1848, yet there was no lack of stress on economic self-help. As a matter of fact, with time, patriotic-minded Bengalees increasingly preached this idea among their countrymen. The sponsors of the *Hindu Mela* tried to spread the idea through the exhibitions of indigenous products organized by them. The business activities of Jyotirindranath Tagore, one of the leading spirits of the *Mela*, were marked by self-help and a spirit of enterprise.

Side by side with the idea of self-help in the field of economic development grew the *Swadeshi* spirit also, which led the patriotic-minded to boycott British goods. Most of the organizers of the *Hindu Mela* were imbued with this spirit. Bholanath Chandra, the author of 'A Voice for the Commerce and Manufactures of India' (Mookerjee's Magazine, 1873-1874), preached "moral hostility" to

British goods. This *Swadeshi* spirit, however, came to be effectively reflected in the editorial of Jogendra Chandra Basu's *Bangavasi* of 27 December 1890, wherein Congressmen were asked to spend money—the money they spent on political agitation in England as well as in travelling and other purposes for attending Congress sessions—on establishing cotton mills and some useful factories. The agitation started by this journal was meant to persuade Bengalees to forswear the use of English goods and revive the arts and industries of the country. It was meant to stop the "milking of India by England". The avowed object of all such writing, as pointed out in the 'Confidential Annual Report on the Vernacular Newspapers Published in the Lower Provinces and Assam in 1891', was to establish the proposition that British commerce being the foundation of British supremacy, "anything that tended to injure that commerce was sure to receive the foremost attention from the British Government", and that "if the Indians could succeed in giving up the use of English goods, Government would find itself compelled to conciliate them for the purpose of inducing them to use such goods". It was argued, continued the Report, that the revival of Indian industry would not only remove the poverty in the people caused by foreign competition, but would also "prove a great help to them in obtaining political rights from the Government".

In the eighteen-nineties, young Nalini Kanta Sen of Chittagong also preached the boycott of British goods. Rabindranath Tagore wanted his countrymen to establish and develop textile industries on their own and sell their products at a price within the reach of the common man. This counsel of self-help was given by him to his countrymen when they were agitating against Lord Elgin's imposition of an excise duty on Indian yarn in 1894 to promote the sale of fine Manchester textiles at a cheaper price in India.

It was, however, realized quite early that without a sufficient number of technically-trained hands capable of applying new inventions to the development of infant industries, it would be difficult to create the necessary spirit of self-reliance and self-help in the field of industrial or economic progress in the country. In 1839, Tarachand Chakrabarti cooperated with others in founding the Mechanics' Institute in Calcutta. The emphasis of this trend of development was still on mere vocational education, though the purpose behind it was to further economic regeneration. Imbued with this idea, Peary Charan Sircar took pains to impart a sound and practical knowledge

of agriculture and farming to his students at Baraset. The Albert Temple of Science, founded in 1875 by the Indian League, was also hitched to vocational education for promoting industrial progress.

But the man who drew up a well-phased scheme for imparting a higher technical and scientific education to students was Pramathanath Basu, the famous Bengalee geologist. He pointed out that they could supply technical skill to Indian industries and open new ones as well if they were sufficiently enterprising.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century foreign training for students in technical education figured largely in the schemes of the promoters of industrial progress. Ramakanta Roy, for instance, an engineer trained in Japan, sponsored the scheme of training students abroad in technical education. His plan was attempted to be realized on a larger public fund by Surendranath Banerjea, Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, K. C. Banerjee, Narendra Nath Sen, Ananda Mohan Basu, J. S. Zemin, Saligram Singh and Rash Behari Ghose through the Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education established in Calcutta in 1904 (see *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 March 1904).

The means to promote industrial progress were seriously discussed at the Industrial Conference, which met in 1891 in Calcutta under the presidency of Pramathanath Basu. This Conference gave birth to the Industrial Association, which, till 1900, offered suggestions for the use of scientific knowledge in industries as well as for exploring new avenues of industrial enterprise and expansion. It is said that the Congress industrial exhibition of 1901 in Calcutta was inspired to a great extent by the exhibitions held earlier under the auspices of the Industrial Association. It was not surprising when Pramathanath Basu was appointed the first Principal of the Bengal Technical Institute in 1906, which was dedicated to the creation of patriotic-minded engineers.

On the eve of the Partition of Bengal the economic trend was towards the development of Indian industries by Indian endeavour, which was underlined by the *Swadeshi* spirit or the resolve to boycott British goods. Thus, the decision to boycott British goods in 1905, which was taken together with launching the anti-Partition agitation, was perfectly in keeping with the growing desire of the Bengalees not only to prise open the economic stranglehold of the British over their land but also to obtain more political rights to satisfy their urge for freedom.

(f) POLITICAL MEANS

Education, it has already been noted, was at the root of the spread of social and political consciousness among the people. The Bengalee-owned Press also, both English and vernacular, occupies an important place in the history of the political awakening and progress of the country. Newspapers in Bengalee hands became the most effective means of focussing public attention on problems which agitated the mind of the intelligentsia, on administrative wrongs, on the basic political rights denied to Indians, on the system of exploitation associated with the British, on ill-conceived Government policies, on social evils, etc.

The freedom of the Press soon became the bogey of the British Government. This freedom was considerably curtailed by Adam's Regulation III of 1823, against which Rammohun Roy and his associates agitated in vain for some time. Even after the departure of Rammohun Roy to England the agitators persisted in their endeavour, held public meetings in the Calcutta Town Hall and ultimately prevailed upon Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Acting Governor-General, to restore the freedom of the Press by Act XI of 1835.

Much later, when the Vernacular Press became increasingly critical of Government, Lord Lytton passed the Vernacular Press Act in 1878 and placed Bengali newspapers under inhibiting restrictions. To evade these humiliating restrictions, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* dropped its vernacular columns on 21 March 1878, thereby becoming overnight an entirely English weekly. But when the Government asked the *Soma Prakash* to enter into a bail-bond for Rs. 1,000 under Section 6 of Act IX of 1878 for having criticized Lytton's Afghan policy and the backward state of education in the Punjab, Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan chose to close its publication on 31 March 1878 rather than keep it going "with a sword drawn over its head". It was only after a tearing agitation had led to the repeal of the Act that the publication of the *Soma Prakash* was resumed on 9 April 1880. It was at this critical hour that Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan reiterated, just as Rammohun Roy had done in 1823, that a free Press, by properly ventilating the wants and grievances of the people, could conduce to good government.

But it was natural on the part of the British Government to want a subservient Vernacular Press. It could not tolerate any criticism of its various policies by the vernacular newspapers, particularly by the *Bangavasi*. So, in 1891, under instructions from Sir Charles

Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, a sedition case was instituted against the editor and publisher of the *Bangavasi*. This was, however, a very weak case, and it was withdrawn when the editor apologized. But the Government, feeling uneasy at what it considered as dangerous preaching of sedition and disaffection by the Vernacular Press, passed, in the teeth of vehement public opposition, India Act IV (Chalmers' Sedition Law) of 1893, which, by amending Sections 124 A and 505 of the Indian Penal Code, made Indian newspapers liable to severe punishment for statements "promoting enmity between classes" and "conducting to public mischief".

To curtail the freedom of the Press further, Lord Curzon passed the Indian Official Secrets Amendment Act in 1904, overriding the wishes of the Indian public and newspaper editors. It sought to amend Lansdowne's Indian Official Secrets Act of 1889, which was passed as a sequel to the publication in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of an official document relating to Gilgit affairs. The extension of the provisions of the Amendment from "military and naval affairs" to "civil affairs" drew forth a vehement protest from Moti Lal Ghosh of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 29 August 1903. He pointed out that it would not only keep erring and oppressive officials "beyond the pale of public criticism", but also threaten the liberty of the Press and of the individual. A vain appeal was made to Lord Curzon to exempt Indian journalists from the operations of the Act, a privilege which journalists in England enjoyed. The restrictions imposed on the freedom of the Press made Bengalee-owned newspapers increasingly critical of the retrograde measures of Lord Curzon. An extreme tone slowly crept into the writings of the bolder nationalists who were dedicated to the cause of undoing the Partition of Bengal.

In the nineteenth century the Press was a handy vehicle of propaganda not only for social reform but also for political progress. It was, virtually speaking, the strongest prop of all the political agitations carried on during the period under study. And these agitations slowly prepared Bengalees for the larger struggle for freedom from the first decade of the twentieth century.

These agitations, which covered a wide range of rights, slowly led to the spread of political consciousness not only among the Bengalees but also among Indians in general. These concerned the right to the freedom of the Press, the right to freedom of expression and of association, the right to retain rent-free land, the right to be associated with the jury system, the right to legal equality with

Europeans, the right of admission to positions of trust and responsibility in the administration of the country, the right to representative Councils and responsible government, the right to local self-government, the right to election, the right to own arms. Agitations, it may be repeated, were carried on in connection with social, educational and economic problems also.

Political agitations were sponsored by the *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha* established in December 1836, which was merged in the Landholders' Society founded in March 1838, by the Bengal British India Society founded in April 1843, by the National Association founded in September 1851, which was merged in the British Indian Association founded in October 1851, by the shortlived Indian League founded in September 1875, by the Indian Association founded in July 1876, by the National Conferences of 1883 and 1885, by the Indian National Congress established in 1885 and by the Bengal Provincial Conferences, the first of which was held in Calcutta in 1888. It should be added that the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, which was established in 1838, was imbued with a strong political spirit by Mr. George Thompson, M.P., under whose encouragement and guidance the Bengal British India Society was founded in April 1843. It was at a meeting of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge on 8 February 1843 that Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee read his paper entitled 'Present State of the East India Company's Judicature and Police under the Bengal Presidency', which, an unmistakable pointer to Young Bengal's infectious spirit of challenge, was branded as seditious by the contemporary Anglo-Indian journals. One of them even suggested that the author of the paper be deported to Batavia.

Holding public meetings, submitting petitions and memoranda both to the Government and Parliament, using the Press, were the means employed for political agitations till the advent of the Indian Association, a middle-class political organization, in July 1876. The Indian Association added some more means to give agitations an all-India character. First, its leader, Surendranath Banerjea, undertook tours and addressed political meetings all over India. Secondly, District Associations, in imitation of the Indian Association, were established in Bengal. Thirdly, it sent Lal Mohan Ghosh as its delegate to England to plead for the causes undertaken by the Indian Association. Subsequently, however, more delegations were sent to England by the Indian National Congress to plead for Indian interests. But it was felt from the time of George Thompson, M.P.,

who promoted Indian causes in England, that a permanent political body should be set up there to enlighten English public opinion on Indian problems. This led to the establishment of the London India Society in 1865, which was later merged in the East India Association. The British Committee, with its organ 'India', came to be set up in 1888. But it had to be abolished in 1901 for want of funds. Fourthly, a National Fund was raised in 1883 for carrying on political agitation all over India.

Agitation by Young Bengal in the eighteen-thirties for the increasing admission of Indians to the Company's administration led to their appointment as Principal Sadar Amins under Regulation V of 1831, as Deputy Collectors under Regulation IX of 1833 and as Deputy Magistrates under Act XV of 1843. Dissatisfaction with these uncovenanted posts was soon expressed by the Bengal British India Society. To it, the exclusion of Indians from the Covenanted Civil Service was unjust. Its successor, the British Indian Association, also carried on agitation in this direction. The public meeting held, on the eve of the renewal of the Charter, at the Town Hall on 29 July 1853 under the presidency of Radhakanta Deb forcefully voiced many Indian grievances, including the exclusion of Indians from the Covenanted Civil Service. This memorable meeting, sponsored by the British Indian Association, was addressed, among others, by Prasannacoomar Tagore, Raja Satyacharan Ghosal, Ramgopal Ghosh, Peary Chand Mitra, Kailash Chandra Basu, Debendranath Tagore and Raja Pratap Chandra Singha Bahadur (see Kailash Chandra Basu). The agitation did not prove to be unavailing. The system of open competitive examination was accepted by the Charter Act of 1853 and reaffirmed by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. The competition was thrown open to all natural-born subjects of Her Majesty, and the first Indian to qualify for the Civil Service was Satyendranath Tagore in 1863. But the lowering of the maximum age in 1866 and 1877 led to agitations, the latter of which under the Indian Association assumed all-India proportions. From 1885 the Congress strongly advocated not only the holding of simultaneous examinations (accepted on paper by Parliament in 1893) but also the employment of Indians in larger numbers.

The agitation for the introduction of the jury system and its extension by the leaders of society as well as by different political organizations from the eighteen-thirties did much to spread political consciousness among the Bengalees. When Elliott's Notification of

1892 abolished the jury system in seven districts of Bengal, the Bengalees (see Jadulal Mallick) launched such a tearing agitation that Government was ultimately forced to restore it in 1893.

The judicial administration of the British often came to be criticized by leaders ranging from Rammohun Roy to W. C. Bonnerjee. Its worst feature was the preservation of the special status of European offenders in the eye of the law of the country. Europeans could not be tried either by Indian jurors or by Indian Magistrates. In 1849, four draft Acts sponsored by Bethune tried to abolish this invidious position of European offenders, but they had to be withdrawn on account of vehement European opposition. Ramgopal Ghosh's rousing speeches in favour of the Acts, branded as 'Black Acts' by Europeans, not only stung the conscience of the Government but also made his conscious countrymen all the more dissatisfied with the continuation of legal inequality between two groups of subjects of the Crown. In 1857, another attempt was made by Sir Barnes Peacock to remove this legal inequality, but his legislation foundered on the rock of European opposition. "The Brahmins of creation" refused to be tried "for a criminal offence by any officer who tried a black native" (Girish Chandra Ghosh). To Radhakanta Deb, Peacock's legislation was a 'White Act' (see also Raja Bahadur Kali Krishna Deb). This 'non-exemption' agitation had to be abandoned by Indians on account of the outbreak of the Mutiny. In 1883, a fresh attempt was made to remove this gross inequality by the Ilbert Bill, but Lord Ripon, in spite of his awareness of the volume of Indian support for the Bill, submitted to the threats of the Europeans and entered into the humiliating Concordat with them in December 1883, which led to the abandonment of the principle of legal equality (see R. C. Dutt). These agitations exacerbated racial animosity between Indians and Europeans and made the former all the more eager to secure freedom from the oppressive system of administration associated with the British.

To check autocracy, leaders of Bengal from Rammohun Roy to Bipin Chandra Pal seriously carried on agitation for the separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of the administration. The leaders of the Indian Association and, subsequently, of the Indian National Congress found in this nagging question enough ammunition for firing broadsides on the autocracy of the British bureaucrats. This autocracy was made all the more intolerable by magisterial powers stemming from Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's Amendment

of the Criminal Procedure Code in 1870, which, in its "Draconian" nature, was without any parallel in the world. It was not without reason, therefore, that W. C. Bonnerjee became its inveterate critic.

The right to learn the use of arms was claimed by Bengalees from the eighteen-thirties. On 12 October 1834, the 'Reformer' published a letter which exhorted Indians to learn the use of firearms (see Prasannacoomar Tagore). This caused great discomposure to Europeans, who accused the native journal of a rancorous attitude towards the Government. Sashi Chandra Datta also, writing in the early eighteen-seventies about the loot and plunder indulged in by Europeans while suppressing mutineers during the Sepoy Mutiny, desired that Indians should be given training in the use of firearms. When Lytton formally deprived Indians of the right to own arms by the Arms Act of 1878, the Indian Association and then the Indian National Congress agitated for its repeal. Indians could never reconcile themselves to the humiliating status into which they were thrown by the Act. Any foreigner in India, no matter if he were a Hottentot, as Bipin Chandra Pal said, could carry arms, while the people of the soil were denied this right. The British Government's discriminatory policy, determined by their racial pride and fear of the rising native temper against many matters of Government policy, came to be condemned on the political platforms of the Indian Association and the Congress.

Agitations from 1872 to 1899 for broadening the basis of Municipal government also conduced to spreading political consciousness. In spite of the partial introduction of the elective principle in the Calcutta Municipality in 1876, Kristo Das Pal continued to be a relentless critic of official control over it. Surendranath Banerjea succeeded in getting the elective principle extended to the constitutions of all municipal bodies in Bengal by the Act of 1882 (see also Jogesh Chandra Datta).

But still official control continued to hamper the progress of municipal government. Misuse of power by the European Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality under the Municipal Act of 1888 was challenged in the High Court by Jadulal Mallick, an important member of the Rate-Payers' Association. The bolder attitude of the elected members led Curzon to give his consent to the Mackenzie Bill of 1899, which reduced the Calcutta Municipality into a rubber stamp in the hands of its European Chairman. A tearing campaign was launched in Calcutta against this retrograde measure. Led by

Raja Binay Krishna Deb and wholeheartedly supported by Romesh Chunder Dutt from London, where he made serious attempts to persuade the Secretary of State to order the withdrawal of the Bill, the agitation created in Calcutta an atmosphere surcharged with bitter feelings against the Government. With the passage of the Bill, 28 members, including Surendranath Banerjea, resigned from the Calcutta Municipality. This spirit of non-cooperation, as demonstrated by the patriotic members, showed which way the political wind in Bengal was blowing.

The demand for having representative Councils and a representative government can be traced from the beginning of the eighteenth-thirties. The levy of the stamp duty under Regulation XII of 1826 came to be criticized as unjust taxation (see Chandra Kumar Tagore). The second letter of "One of Yourselves", published in the Government Gazette of 8 September 1831, criticized that "such a mode of taxation without the consent or knowledge of the subjects and entirely at the caprice of the rulers" was a perfect anomaly in the principles of the British Government. There was no legitimate authority to control the cupidity of the rulers. The same resentment was voiced by Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee when the income-tax came to be imposed in 1861. Taxation without representation was considered a sin.

The composition of the Supreme Council and of the Provincial Councils as well failed to meet the aspirations of the intelligentsia. Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan wanted the tax-payers to control expenditure through their representatives. Surendranath Banerjea, Lal Mohan Ghosh, W. C. Bonnerjee and Bipin Chandra Pal, all Congress stalwarts, sustained their endeavour for having truly representative Councils in the country.

Surendranath Banerjea, particularly, led the campaign in India and England to persuade the Government to concede the principle of election and the right of the members of the Councils to discuss the budget and ask questions on matters of public interest. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 indirectly conceded the principle of election, though it gave the members of the Councils the right of discussing the budget and of interpellation. These concessions fell far short of Congress demands. The resultant atmosphere of dissatisfaction, which was accentuated by the Partition of 1905, led to the rise of extremism in Bengal.

Another matter on which serious anti-British agitation was

carried on in Bengal was the cruel treatment meted out by the Government to some rulers of the native states of India. The arrest and the subsequent deposition of Malhar Rao Gaikwar of Baroda in 1875 on the untenable charge of misgovernment sparked off an agitation in Bengal led by Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee. His article entitled "The Baroda Coup d'etat: The Empire is Peace", published in 'Mookerjee's Magazine' (Baroda Number, March, 1875, No. XXVII), created a great stir in Calcutta. This article was actually an impeachment of Lord Northbrook's Baroda policy. The climax of the agitation was reached on 8 April 1876, when a public meeting was held in the Town Hall under the presidency of Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to vote an address of thanks to Lord Northbrook on the eve of his departure from India. Sambhu Chandra and his friends, known as "the immortal ten of Bengal", set an example of "fearless and unselfish patriotism" by actively opposing the attempt to vote an address to the deposer of Malhar Rao. Though defeated, they set a stirring example of moral courage before their countrymen.

The deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh of Kashmir in 1889 on the flimsy ground of plotting against Mr. Plowden, the Resident, led to the launching of a similar agitation against the British Government by Moti Lal Ghosh of the Amrita Bazar Patrika. It was obvious to all that the Government of India had deposed Maharaja Pratap Singh as a precautionary measure against the intrigues of Russia. But Moti Lal failed to understand the disinclination of the British to restore Pratap Singh to his *gadi* after they had succeeded in clamping down their control over Gilgit as well as in constructing railway lines through his territory. However, the mounting pressure of the Indian Press ultimately forced the Government to restore Pratap Singh to his *gadi* in Kashmir.

The agitation led by the Amrita Bazar Patrika, together with the disconcerting questions asked by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh in the House of Commons, promoted greater reaction among the high-handed Civilians and Political Agents. But neither Lytton's Vernacular Press Act of 1878 nor Lansdowne's Official Secrets Act of 1889 could curb the outspokenness of the Amrita Bazar Patrika against the ill-inspired policies of the Government. Both Sir Lepel Griffin, Political Agent for Central India, and his successor, Mr. Henvey, smarted under the vitriolic writings of the Amrita Bazar Patrika. In July 1890, Mr. Henvey issued circulars directing all Indian Chiefs

and their subjects living within the jurisdiction of the Central Indian Political Agency not to read or communicate with the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. These circulars, needless to say, tried in vain to conceal the defects of the British administration in princely India. Henvey lost his sleep when Bradlaugh asked questions about these circulars in the House of Commons. Thus, hostility towards the British policy of reaction turned out to be one of the best promoters of national consciousness in the country.

Rajnarayan Basu, the spiritual father of the *Hindu Mela*, turned Hinduism into a great force behind the promotion of a feeling of nationality in the country. In his letter of 15 June 1878 to Sib Chandra Deb, he exhorted the members of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* not only to renounce foreign manners and customs (see his 'Prospectus of a Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal, 1866'), but also to adopt a national form of worship, a national theistic textbook and a national ritual. Both were necessary for promoting national feeling. He never thought of himself as a Brahmo outside the pale of Hinduism. His speech on 'The Superiority of the Hindu Religion' (15 September 1872) reflected a virile spirit of nationalism, to promote which an ambitious scheme for founding a *Maha Hindu Samiti* (The Great Union of Hindus) was drawn up in 1881. Interestingly enough, this endeavour to revive Vedantic Hinduism with a view to promoting a feeling of nationality received help from many leading figures in society. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Swami Vivekananda gave this endeavour a new impetus and a new direction, in the interests of the political, social and economic regeneration of the country, by asking both the young and the old to imbibe in the right spirit the fundamental truths of the Upanishads. To him, this was one of the surest ways of liberating the Mother from foreign bondage.

A new wind was blowing, and college students began to take a keen interest in the destiny of the country. The *Hindu Mela* had already shaken them out of their torpor. The compositions of patriotic poets in the eighteen-seventies, the study of the lives of Italian patriots (Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour) in Bengali, the rousing lectures of Surendranath Banerjea on Sri Chaitanya and the Sikh war of independence, induced many young men to dedicate themselves to the work of promoting the interests of the country. The Students' Association, established by Ananda Mohan Basu with the help of Surendranath Banerjea and others in 1875, inspired in the youths of

Calcutta aspirations which could find fulfilment only in freedom from foreign control.

The aspirations of the younger generation came to be deeply influenced by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. His song, *Bande Mataram*, propped up the patriotic and defiant spirit of the agitators participating in the anti-Partition or *Swadeshi* movement inaugurated on 7 August 1905. The monumental work of Rajani Kanta Gupta on the Sepoy Mutiny was a source of inspiration to Bengalee youths. The researches of Akshay Kumar Maitra revealed to his countrymen the lie on which the Holwell monument had been erected. It was thus natural to see Nikhil Nath Roy, in 1902, criticizing Curzon for spending public money on the re-erection of the discredited monument.

To add depth to students' thinking, the Society for the Higher Training of Young Men was founded on 31 August 1891. It changed its name to Calcutta University Institute on 15 August 1896 at the suggestion of Dr. Rashbehari Ghose. Debates and discussions, in which both well-known men and students participated, encouraged young men to take to purposeful thinking as well as to work for their own moral and intellectual elevation.

It should be noted that political agitations not only influenced young minds but also attracted them towards the Congress. As can be made out from the *Sanjibani's* report of 10 January 1891, Bengali youths doughtily performed the duties assigned to them at the Calcutta Congress of 1890.

The Sivaji festival, which, according to the Sedition Committee Report of 1918, was one of the first indications of a revolutionary movement in Western India, was inaugurated in Calcutta by the Congress leaders on 19 June 1902 with a view to inspiring youths to follow in the footsteps of the great national hero for reviving the strength of the people long lying demoralized and emasculated under British rule (see *Sanjibani* of 19 June 1902). In 1903, Saraladevi issued a manifesto, in which she passionately pleaded for the country's cause and exhorted young Bengal to emulate the achievements, the prowess and the patriotic zeal of the Indian worthies. Her virile pen gave an impetus to the celebration of the *Birastami* festival in Bengal. On the occasion of the *Birastami* festival, which was celebrated in her house in October 1903, Bengali youths performed feats with swords and *lathis* to the great delight of the spectators (see, *Jyoti*, 15 October 1903). In its endeavour to inspire youths to a new height

of patriotism, this occasion, therefore, bore a close resemblance to the *Hindu Mela* of Nabagopal Mitra. That Surendranath Banerjea also was an enthusiastic supporter of this festival as well as of the Sivaji festival was proved by the rousing speech he delivered at the Classic Theatre on 17 July 1903.

A word has to be added here about the role played by Sakharam Ganesh Deushkar in the celebration of the Sivaji festivals in Calcutta from 1902 to 1906. On the occasion of the Sivaji festival on 19 June 1902 he brought out a pamphlet entitled *Sivaji Maharaj*, copies of which were distributed free of cost among the public. On every occasion of the same festival up to the year 1906 copies of Deushkar's pamphlet were distributed free of cost among the people. In 1904, his pamphlet was renamed *Sivaji Diksha*, and it was distributed together with Rabindranath Tagore's *Sivaji Utsav*. In 1906, the festival was celebrated at the *Pantir Math* in Calcutta in the midst of great political excitement, and it was attended by no less a man than B. G. Tilak, the political preceptor of Deushkar. The pamphlet brought out by Deushkar on this occasion was simply entitled *Sivaji*.

But this hero-worship came to be criticized by the 'People and Prativasi' in its English columns on 14 and 15 September 1903. To it, a Sivaji day or *Birastami* day was merely an occasion for speech-making. It held that speeches and 'stage-mockeries' would never conduce to national regeneration. The most essential thing for national regeneration was the reform of national character. To develop the nation's manhood, the paper suggested, the youths should be put through "a course of rigid discipline and moral training". It was only such young men who could seriously cultivate the qualities of a national hero. For "do-nothing young men", for "emaciated bullies of varying ages ceaselessly talking of football", the *Birastami* meant nothing.

However, the youths of Bengal showed what they were capable of doing when they responded to the call of their leaders and plunged into the vortex of the anti-Partition movement in 1905.

A new life was visible among the educated Bengali women also. Their participation in the proceedings of the Calcutta Congress in 1890 showed their eagerness to keep pace with the politically-conscious men in the march towards freedom.

The Congress had not yet taken root in the masses, but still to draw the latter to its proceedings industrial exhibitions were organized from time to time in connection with its annual meetings. The first

such industrial exhibition was held at Poona in 1895. Thus, the Poona people, wrote Krishna Kumar Mitra, showed "the best way of imparting political education to the masses". Subsequently, industrial exhibitions were held in Calcutta also in connection with Congress sessions.

The Congress had forged new bonds of unity among the people of the different provinces in India. It offered the communities of different denominations a common political platform against their common but formidable enemy. It did try to promote a sense of "composite nationalism" drawing its sustenance from the cooperative endeavour of all communities—Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis.

Its growing influence and increasingly clamant demand for political reforms, including the introduction of the elective principle in the constitution of the Councils, gradually came to be viewed with disfavour by the ruling authorities in Bengal. This disfavour soon came to be expressed in many ways. Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, declined the invitation to attend the Congress session at Calcutta in 1890. He also issued a Circular which prohibited Government officials from attending the Congress session even as visitors (*Bangavasi*, 2 January 1891). The seventh resolution of the Congress of 1890, moved by Lal Mohan Ghosh and seconded by Mr. G. Yule, criticized Elliott's conduct in returning the invitation cards sent to him and the members of his household (*Bangavasi*, 3 January 1891). Some vernacular newspapers did not hesitate to point out that the Congress was being treated as a seditious organisation, though it did not contemplate any revolution. That was the reason, complained the *Bangavasi* of 2 January 1891, why the detective police was to be found wherever there was the faintest smell of the Congress. It was reported that detective officers took down the names of youths who had served as volunteers at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1890, and that the Government had decided not to allow these young men to enter its service at any time (*Navayuga*, 8 January 1891). It was also reported by the *Samaya* of 2 January 1891 that in many places the police prevented people from giving subscriptions to the Congress.

Bureaucratic displeasure was extended in 1901 to the Bengal Provincial Conference at Midnapore as well. The Magistrate of Midnapore issued orders to his subordinates not to attend the Conference. He also collected information relating to the donors who

had contributed towards the expenses of the Conference, the resolutions that were passed and the names of the volunteers that were enlisted. The Indian Nation of 13 May 1901 banteringly commented that the Magistrate, whose pastime was "to tabulate, register, scrutinize, index and treasure up all this information in official archives for the knowledge of succeeding generations, should note that no law had yet taken away the liberty of the people to hold political meetings".

Official displeasure, police vigilance and eavesdropping, it is interesting to note, made mofussilites afraid to join or even talk of the Congress. A correspondent of the *Hitakari* thus wrote in its issue of 29 December 1890: "Most of the mofussilites are frightened at the name of the Congress. They deem it uncommon valour to attend its session. They see no good in a movement which is carried on against the wishes of the ruling powers. Hakim, Deputy, Daroga, Jemadar, and folks like them are the only powerful men in the eyes of the mofussilites and are therefore held in great respect by them. The Congress has not the support of these officers, nay, it is disliked by them; the police is constantly watching every group or gathering to hear how they talk about the Congress. This has inspired the minds of men in the mofussil with fear regarding the Congress, and women are in particular dread of it". This correspondent, who was going to attend the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1890 as a delegate, added: "I go to Calcutta ten times a year. None objected to my going there before. But now that I am going there to attend the Congress, all my family look sad. They fear danger to me from my presence at the Congress, because the Congress had not the support of the officials. And their fear is increased by reason of the zamindar of the place having refused to lend his hall for a meeting in connection with the Congress. The zamindar refused his hall on the ground that no meeting in which officials were not present could be of any importance. The news of this refusal of a wealthy zamindar to have anything to do with the Congress spread among the women of the place, and they are in actual dread of the consequences of attending the Congress". However, the correspondent at last, in spite of all the inhibitions in his way, made up his mind to attend the Congress session in 1890, inspired by his wife who thought that it was better to share the danger with thousands by joining the Congress than live a life of abject dependence on the rich and powerful.

Extremism had not yet raised its head in Bengal, yet the Congress came to be dreaded by officials who began to use all the means at

their disposal to keep as many people as it was possible, including young men and mofussilities, away from its sessions. Full official reaction set in with the Police Amendment Act of February 1895 (it provided that inhabitants, be they innocent or not, would have to bear the cost of a punitive police if there be any disturbance in their village—see Rabindranath Tagore) and Chalmers' Sedition Law of 1898. Lord Curzon, who assumed the reins of Government as Governnor-General in 1899, made it worse by the Municipal Act of the same year, the Indian Official Secrets Act and the Indian Universities Act of 1904 and the Partition of Bengal in 1905. The India Government tried, with the concurrence of the Home Government, to hold back the tide of progress brought about by the rising political forces in Bengal.

Many suggestions were offered at this time to strengthen the political movement in Bengal. Bengali critics treated the Congress as a begging institution. The most notable among these critics were Jogendra Chandra Basu, Rabindranath Tagore and Bipin Chandra Pal. To them, the political agitations of the Congress were no better than begging for political reforms.

Rabindranath Tagore and Bipin Chandra Pal wanted Congress workers to develop an "intrepid faith" in self-help and self-reliance. Political mendicancy must be given up. They must learn to work in a spirit of independence. To Bipin Chandra Pal, non-cooperation and passive resistance offered the best means of developing this internal strength. He disliked the sight of Congress leaders pledging their loyalty to the British Government, as was done by Pherozeshah Mehta at the Bombay Congress of 1904, and trying to promote the cause of nationalism within the bounds of the Indian Penal Code.

Many Bengali leaders, including Rabindranath Tagore and Bipin Chandra Pal, stressed the necessity of building up a strong sense of nationalism in the country on the firm foundation of Hindu-Muslim cooperation. But the task of bringing Hindus and Muslims together on the Congress platform was proving to be difficult from 1890. The Muslims of Bengal were made to believe that they would gain nothing by joining the Congress. The *Sudhakar*, the only organ of the Bengali Muslims, was bitterly hostile to the Congress. It spread the idea among Muslims that the Congress stood for Hindu interests only.

Despite this, however, there were Muslims in Bengal who fully believed that the Congress would confer great benefits on the country. Syed Abdur Rab Chowdhury, for instance, wrote in the *Sudhakar*

(January 1891), stating that the work of the Congress would be beneficial both to the Hindus and the Muslims. He held that their political interests could not but be identical and that whoever, actuated by motives of self-interest, threw obstacles in the way of the Congress was a traitor to his mother country.

Within a few years, in spite of the malicious propaganda of the *Sudhakar*, a large number of Muslims came forward to support the Congress. At the Bengal Provincial Conference at Midnapore in 1901, there were several Muslim delegates, one of whom, Maulvi Abdul Kayoon of Burdwan, made a remarkable speech regarding simultaneous examinations for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service. Kayoon added that Muslims did an injustice to themselves in saying that they would not be able to hold their own in a competitive examination with Hindus (Bengalee, 9 May 1901).

Abdul Rasul, Bar-at-Law, who presided over the momentous Bengal Provincial Conference at Barisal in April 1906, typified the new spirit of composite nationalism that was growing despite all the divisive moves of the British.

In the development of this kind of patriotism, which, transcending communal barriers, made Hindus and Muslims cooperate to promote their common political interests, lay the real strength of the Congress. None realized better than the leaders of renaissance Bengal the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity in the national endeavour to achieve political and economic progress. This growing sense of oneness came to be effectively expressed, on the *Rakhibandhan* day (16 October 1905), in the declaration of Rabindranath Tagore that Bengalees, both Hindus and Muslims, living in the separated parts of Bengal, were blood brothers.

To strengthen and popularize the movement led by the Congress in Bengal, it was further suggested by the *Bangavasi* (3 January 1891) that the public should be allowed free access to its sittings. In the same editorial it commented that the Baboos discussed the question of the deliverance of the country, yet no one was allowed to be present without paying an admission fee. The Baboos, it added, assembled for the purpose of advocating the cause of liberty, equality and fraternity, but by requiring admission fees they showed a singular want of those principles in their own conduct. On the other hand, Manomohan Ghosh, who played a significant role in the Congress session of 1890, defended the organization by stating that it represented the thinking section of society.

However, there were other suggestions also to make the political movement popular in Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore's suggestion was that Bengali should be used by the leaders to communicate their ideas to the masses. They spoke in English at all political meetings, drew up resolutions in English and left, without caring to know whether the masses, ignorant of English, had understood anything or not. This was particularly intolerable to him in regard to the proceedings of the Bengal Provincial Conferences. Thus, if the political movement was to be effective, by and large, in Bengal, it had to look to mass or popular support, which could be secured only through the use of the Bengali language.

This was, however, not a new idea. Among those who had advocated it earlier Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya stands out conspicuously. To him, English was necessary for inter-provincial communication and unity in India; but inside Bengal the best means of communication for effecting mass awakening and creating mass support for political and social movements was the Bengali language. Incidentally, the claim of Hindi to be the lingua franca of India from the political point of view found staunch advocates in Jogendra Nath Vidyabhusan and Bhudev Chandra Mukhopadhyaya.

All this apart, to enable the Congress in Bengal to take root among the masses, it was suggested by Krishna Kumar Mitra that there should be District and Subdivision Congress Committees, which would exert themselves to set up village committees for making villagers self-reliant and politically conscious. The plan of Bipin Chandra Pal to achieve the same purpose was analogous to that of Krishna Kumar Mitra. Rabindranath Tagore advanced the plan of village reconstruction to strengthen the basis of the political movement in Bengal.

To awaken the villagers, the Amrita Bazar Patrika, however, advanced a different plan. It strongly suggested on 15 May 1901 that the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Midnapore (1901) after the Jhikergacha pattern should be followed in future. It was pointed out that the Conference held at Jhikergacha in 1885 was preceded by hundreds of meetings in different villages of Jessore to make the villagers realize that their continued apathy would completely ruin the country. This propaganda worked. Feeling that they had a duty to perform by their country, villagers came in large numbers to attend the Jhikergacha Conference.

The Bengal Provincial Conferences held from 1888 to 1900

were, according to the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 15 May 1901, no provincial conferences at all, for provincial leaders did not attend them unless forced to do so and the masses were kept in ignorance about their proceedings. The delegates indulged in "some cheering, hip, hip, hurrahing" and departed with vacant minds. But the Midnapore Conference of 1901, by following the Jhikergacha pattern, generated tremendous enthusiasm among the villagers for its proceedings. This Conference decided to appoint an agent who would bring cases of oppression to the notice of the local officials (Krishna Kumar Mitra also offered a similar suggestion) and prepare the ground for the success of the next conference.

THE CONVERGENCE OF FORCES

On the eve of the Partition of 1905, Bengal, which had been instrumental in awakening the whole of India to a new sense of unity and political consciousness unknown before, sat at the centre of a convergence of forces, revivifying its people, particularly the middle classes, and preparing them for the hard struggle for freedom against the British.

From the political point of view, there was great enthusiasm among the educated Bengalees, particularly the youths, for the cause of political progress. The Congress found in them many patriotic hearts prepared for any sacrifice for the sake of the motherland's salvation. Many people in the mofussil also had become conscious of the stakes for which the Congress leaders were exhorting them to unite. The well-tested agitational method was given a new dimension by the growing spirit of challenge to the British policy of reaction. This spirit, fortified by the spirit of self-help, slowly assumed the form of non-cooperation and passive resistance, as advocated by Bipin Chandra Pal. It not only encouraged patriotic Bengalees to break the bounds of loyalty to the Crown, but also helped the rise of extremism in Bengal from 1907. The feeling of nationality, deepened by racial bitterness, brought the Bengalees together, under the shadow of the great crisis of 1905, against their foreign oppressors.

The growing spirit of self-reliance and self-help encouraged Bengalees to build up *swadeshi* industries and boycott British goods. Young men were encouraged to become technical-minded, so that they could make themselves useful to the cause of industrial progress in Bengal.

The spirit of self-help in the educational sphere was promoted

by the resentment of the leaders against the inhibitions associated with the system of education sponsored by the Government. The urge for a new system of national education, which was steadily developed from the third decade of the nineteenth century, found its fulfilment in the Bengal National Council of Education established in 1906. The concerted endeavour to end the intellectual or spiritual enslavement of Bengalees was encouraging. They were to imbibe an education which would make them love their mother country and its culture, as well as work hard to further its progress in every sphere of life.

Religious preachers and social reformers had created a new sense of social cohesion. Freedom from social restraints, both for men and women, slowly led to the release of an increasing amount of human energy, which helped the cause of national regeneration. For freedom-seekers there was no class or caste distinction. The masses of Barisal were thrilled when they were told by Aswini Kumar Datta that they were welcome to tread the path to freedom along with anyone else in society.

Political, economic, intellectual and social forces, which had been gathering momentum and strength since the second decade of the nineteenth century, gave Bengalees a new life and a new spirit of challenge, the latent strength of which was brought out by the Partition of their province in 1905.

Bande Mataram, a song that was raised by freedom-seekers "to the rank of a national anthem" (Sedition Committee Report of 1918), had seeped deep into the country's heart and turned its course for once and for all time. *Bande Mataram* (Hail to thee, Oh Mother) became the oppressed nation's battle-cry. Anti-Partition meetings in Calcutta and East Bengal reverberated with this cry. Agitators fearlessly faced police *lathi* charges and courted imprisonment with this cry on their lips. It embodied resurgent Bengal's new spirit—the spirit that craved for freedom, the spirit that hated compromise with evil and injustice, the spirit that prepared the soul for any sacrifice in the cause of the motherland, the spirit that made the patriotic follower of the *Sakti* cult cry out: "Oh Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness and make me a man" (Vivekananda as quoted by the Sedition Committee Report of 1918).

Calcutta,
January 5, 1967

NIRMAL SINHA
Compiler & Editor

POSTSCRIPT

It is to be noted that names of all Bengali journals, books, poems, clubs, associations and societies have been italicized in the book. So also the names of all Persian and Urdu journals.

Calcutta,

August 15, 1968

NIRMAL SINHA



Compiler & Editor
NIRMAL SINHA

January 5, 1967

RAJA RAMMOHUN ROY

Raja Rammohun Roy was born in a well-to-do family on 22 May 1772 (or 1774, according to some) at Radhanagar in the Hooghly district. His restless spirit, combined with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and a penchant for mysticism, drove him, after he had mastered very early in life Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, to break away from the domestic groove and the traditional mental moorings of his forbears in search of the Truth, which had been so unconscionably distorted by selfish interpreters of the Shastras as to choke all the springs of healthy life in society. His extensive reading and travelling, while very young, and equally extensive and uninhibited contacts with men of all religious denominations, including Muslim Sufis and Hindu ascetics, revealed to him the pressing necessity of removing the social detritus of the past, together with all meaningless religious prejudices. His remarkable knowledge of English, learnt while working under Mr. Digby, the Collector of Rangpur, from 1809 to 1814 enabled him to become the leading spokesman of the progressive camp in Calcutta, where he settled in 1816. The founder of the *Brahmo Samaj* in 1828, he went to England in 1831 with three ends in view: to represent the grievances of the Emperor of Delhi to the King of England, to be present at the discussion of the House of Commons on the renewal of the Charter and to counteract the *Dharma Sabha's* agitation there against the abolition of the *Sati*. The title of *Raja* was conferred upon him by the Emperor of Delhi.

UNCOMPROMISING SENSE OF SELF-RESPECT

Always dignified and fearless, he never allowed his sense of self-respect to be compromised by the humble position he occupied in the service of the Company. An honourable exception to the English Civil Servants' humiliating custom of keeping their native employees standing before them, Rammohun, naturally enough, did not take lying down the contumely to which he was deliberately subjected by Sir Frederick Hamilton, the haughty Collector of Bhagalpur. His petition to Lord Minto on 12 April 1809, seeking redress, had the effect of getting Hamilton reprimanded and warned by the Government (Judicial—Criminal—Proceedings, No. 26, 12 June 1809). To stand up to white arrogance in defence of personal

dignity and self-respect on the part of any Indian was an unthinkable proposition in those days, but Rammohun did it and did do it in such a way as to awaken his countrymen to the need of casting aside their inferiority complex in the interests of national regeneration.

ADVOCATE OF UNITY AND TOLERANCE

All his ideas about social and religious reform were aimed at effecting what is known today as 'emotional integration' based upon a sense of oneness, which alone, he realised, could render possible the political regeneration of the country. Tormented by the repulsive spectacle of disunity and oppression in Hindu society, because of sectarian differences, of the diversity of rites and rituals and of polytheism, he steadily developed the Vedantic idea of the unity of the Godhead about which there cannot be any difference between one religion and another. With belief in miracles and idolatry banned from his scheme of worship, he tried to erect a common platform for the followers of all religious denominations in India.

What actuated Rammohun to establish the *Atmiya Sabha* in 1816, the Unitarian Committee in 1821, the Vedanta College in 1825 and the *Brahmo Samaj* (popularly known at the time as the *Brahma Sabha*) in August 1828 was the singular purpose of promoting among the different religious groups not only a faith in the unity of the divine and of man, but also a spirit of tolerance. It is this very spirit that prompted him to exhort the students of Duff's school to discard all prejudices and to read the Bible with an eye on its moral precepts. Bible-reading, he said, would not necessarily make them Christians. He had not become a Christian by reading the Bible, nor had he become a Muslim by reading the Koran, nor had Dr. H. H. Wilson become a Hindu by studying the Shastras. He exemplified his preaching by throwing open, in January 1830, the prayer-hall of the *Brahmo Samaj* in Calcutta to all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. He, thus, showed the path to communal harmony, the attainment of which was necessary for strengthening the endeavour of his countrymen to achieve political unity and freedom.

SOCIAL REFORMER

Untouchability, the concomitant of the Hindu caste-system, has been the bane of India. To Rammohun's liberal mind this caste-system appeared as an obstacle which prevented the Hindus from developing any political interest or patriotic feeling or any sense of

unity. His *Brahmo Samaj* was, therefore, meant to be a matrix for the evolution of a casteless society, an undying ideal for all nation-builders of India.

The women of India, whose contribution to the country's political regeneration is inestimable, have every reason to be grateful to Rammohun whose anti-*Sati* agitation, carried on in the teeth of vehement orthodox opposition, was one of the most important factors that influenced Lord Bentinck to abolish the diabolical custom of *Sati* by Regulation XVII of 4 December 1829. It set in motion the emancipation movement, which steadily moved on to break their fetters, raise their status and galvanise them into a tremendous dynamic force in the freedom-struggle of the country. In his 'Second Conference on the Practice of Burning Widows' Rammohun held that women were not inferior to men in understanding. Given opportunities, they could shine forth like Lilavati, Bhanumati and Maitreyi (wife of Yajnavalkya), all celebrated for their knowledge of the Shastras. Virtuous, brave and faithful, women should not be exposed to distress, humiliation and cruelty by polygamous men. To him, women had not only the right to life, but also the right to inheritance.

ADVOCATE OF WESTERN EDUCATION

To make the society of his day fit for civil and political liberty he urged the introduction of Western education in the country. In his letter to Lord Amherst, dated 11 December 1823, he advocated the idea of imparting to Indian youths a knowledge of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful sciences, which had made Europe and her peoples superior to others. In this letter he pinpointed the futility of spending money, as provided for in the Charter Act of 1813, on the dissemination of Sanskrit learning with its emphasis on metaphysical speculations. In the light of his founding the Vedanta College in 1825 there is no reason to think that he deprecated the teaching of the Sanskrit language itself. A demure supporter of the Hindu College, an active worker of the Calcutta School Book Society from the third year of its existence, the founder of the Anglo-Hindu School, Rammohun's educational policy, adopted by the Government in 1835, was fully vindicated by the steady growth of political consciousness in the country.

But this patriot, in his zeal to promote Western education, was not forgetful of the importance of the Bengali language in the

administration of the Bengal Presidency. Apart from enriching it himself by his own tracts on different social issues, he suggested, in his skit entitled 'On the possibility, practicability, and expediency of substituting the Bengali language for the English', that the English in India should adopt Bengali as their language. And to facilitate intercourse between the English and the Indians he wrote and published in 1826 the 'Bengalee Grammar in the English Language'.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In shaking Indians out of their torpor into a new political consciousness Rammohun's espousal of the cause of the freedom of the Press was of no mean importance. A friend of James Silk Buckingham, the editor of the Calcutta Chronicle, the first paper in India to draw the attention of the Government to wrongs done by its officials, Rammohun protested against Adam's Regulation III of 1823, which deprived the Press of its freedom by making the existence of every periodical dependent upon Government licence, which could be rescinded by the authorities at their discretion. As a mark of protest against the humiliating conditions in which a licence had to be obtained, Rammohun stopped the publication of his Persian weekly, *Mirat-ul-Ukhbar*. But the more important step taken by him for the restoration of the liberty of the Press was to send two Appeals, one to the Supreme Court and the other to the King-in-Council. Though both were rejected, they never ceased to be a source of inspiration to Indian political thinkers. Rightly called by Collet "the Areopagitica of India", the Appeal to the King-in-Council pointed out that it was not expedient on the part of the Government to remain in darkness, as a result of the Press being gagged, about the people's sentiments and their grievances against the administration, which, if allowed to accumulate, might lead to a revolution. Metcalfe's Act XI of 1835, which restored the freedom of the Press in India, fully vindicated the position of Rammohun to the immense delight of his politically-conscious friends. The future showed how important the free Press proved to be as a political weapon in the hands of Indian freedom-seekers.

Influenced by Montesquieu and Bentham, Rammohun sought to enlarge his countrymen's civil and political rights by getting unreasonable restrictions on them removed. When the Jury Regulation came into force in 1827, by which a Hindu or a Muslim juror could not try Christians, including native converts, and which denied both

Hindus and Muslims any seat in the Grand Jury, Rammohun sent a petition to Parliament, pointing out the invidious religious distinction made in the Regulation and suggesting changes in it in keeping with the justifiable demands of the Indians. This augured well for the subsequent movement for obtaining more and more civil and political rights for Indians.

In his six papers or communications to the Board of Control he championed causes, some of which continued not only to agitate the minds of Indians but also to make them increasingly vocal in their demand for their rights and the redress of their wrongs. In his 'Questions and Answers on the Revenue System of India' (August 19, 1831) he espoused the cause of the rack-rented ryot and proposed that there be a reduction in the revenue taken from the zamindar with a corresponding reduction in the rent paid by the poor ryot. The consequent decrease in the revenue could be met, as he suggested, by employing low-salaried Indian Collectors on 300 or 400 rupees per month in lieu of highly-paid Europeans. He also advocated the permanent employment of Indian assessors (Mufti) in the judicial department on the same salary. The appointment of Indian Deputy-Collectors from 1833 and of Indian Deputy Magistrates from 1843 shows that his advocacy did not go in vain. But the employment of low-salaried Indians was not the end of his policy. He wanted higher posts in the revenue department to be thrown open to educated Indians of respectable families. Together with this, he also urged the British not to entertain any notion of superiority and not to send to India any Civilian before he was 24 or 25 years of age. This was the beginning of the movement for increasing the association of Indians with the British administration.

To safeguard individual liberty he also advocated the separation of powers. He not only wanted the separation of the executive and judicial functions, but also special power for the Sudder Diwani Adalat to issue the writ of Habeas Corpus. Behind his proposal about the establishment of the Panchayat-jury system, which was to be used as the basis of trial by jury, there was the same purpose of preventing any miscarriage of justice.

Though the educated classes in general never felt enthused over Rammohun's plan to stop the drainage of Indian wealth by importing British 'character' and 'capital', they could not but appreciate his eagerness to improve the mechanical arts and the agricultural and commercial systems of the country. What one has, however, to note

in this plan is Rammohun's spirit of cooperation which made him look forward to British assistance for the advancement of the material interests of India. This liberal spirit of his, however, did not preclude the possibility of India becoming independent, and yet of benefiting from the mechanical, scientific and political knowledge of the English and keeping up her friendly commercial intercourse with England.

He was also the first man to visualise, in his letter to J. Crawford on August 17, 1829, the growth of the spirit of resistance among Indians, under the influence of Western education and constant intercourse with Europeans, to any unjust and oppressive measure tending to degrade them in society.

As a nationalist eager to forge new and enduring bonds of unity for his countrymen, he hated the proselytization work of the Christian missionaries for the divisive influence it exercised in Indian society, and maintained that Indians were under no obligation to Christians for science, literature and religion, because the world was actually indebted to the East for these.

Freedom movements in the West sustained and intensified his love of liberty. If the suppression of liberty in Naples in 1821 hurt him, the success of the cause of liberty in the Spanish colonies in America and in France (the July Revolution of 1830) threw him into ecstasies of delight. No less was his jubilation when the Reform Bill was passed in England in 1832. An internationalist, he hated national narrowness as seen in the operation of the system of passports, and advocated the necessity of removing political differences between countries by submitting them to a Congress composed of an equal number of members from the Parliament of each.

A social and religious reformer, an educationist, a lover of liberty in all forms and the pioneer of New India, Raja Rammohun Roy died at Bristol in England on 27 September 1833.

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TARINI CHARAN MITRA

Born about 1772, Tarini Charan Mitra was the son of Durga Charan Mitra. In May 1801, he was appointed the second Munshi in the Hindustani Department of the Fort William College, and from December 1809 to May 1830 he worked in the same Department as Head Munshi. Because of his high standing in society, he was made, in April 1828, a member of the petty Jury, together with Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyaya and Krishnamohan De. After retirement, he took service under the Raja of Benares.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Like Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen and Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, Tarini Charan was also intimately associated with the activities of the Calcutta School Book Society, which was established in July 1817 to produce a general fondness for reading among the lower classes of Indians by supplying them with books in their own language, suitable to their intellectual capacity. Joining the Society as a member of its Provisional Committee, he later became its Secretary. In collaboration with Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen, he brought out for the students a book of moral precepts entitled *Nitikatha*. The Society did much to spread education among the children of the poorer classes, which had been a desideratum in society for a long time. The Hindu College and the School Book Society together might be said to have heralded a new era in the social history of Bengal.

SENSE OF BELONGING

Tarini Charan was an orthodox Hindu and a staunch supporter of the *Dharma Sabha*. He not only signed the two pro-*Sati* petitions

which were amalgamated and placed under the care of Hare. This amalgamated school, subsequently called the Hare School, still perpetuates the hallowed memory of the Scottish pioneer. Indigent but meritorious students also benefited no less from Hare's generous disposition.

Whether it be in school or in his humble parlour, whether it be at the meetings of the Academic Association in Srikrishna Singha's Maniktala garden-house, where debates and discussions were held to enable young men to develop their power of speech and capacity to think independently, or at the meetings of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge of which he was the patron, David Hare by his presence and understanding mind encouraged them to strive to attain higher planes of thought through persistent mental exercise.

PROMOTER OF VERNACULAR EDUCATION

Discreetly keeping himself aloof from the controversy that raged for a long time between the Anglicists and the Orientalists over the system of education suitable for Indians, as well as from the agitation against the immoderation of the 'Young Calcutta' group which led to the dismissal of Krishnamohan Banerjea and Rasik Krishna Mallick from the Pataldanga English School in September 1831, Hare demurely went about his life's mission of promoting both English and vernacular education in the country with the zeal of monastic scholars of medieval Europe. But this work had unmistakably a vernacular slant, for he believed that a sound vernacular education was necessary for Bengalee youths to enable them to translate into their own language useful English books on Western thought and science. It was this belief that prompted him to take special care of the free vernacular school at Arpuli till the last day of its closure in 1835, as well as to take great interest in the future of the new Hindu Vernacular School (Hindu College Pathsala) the foundation-stone of which was laid by him near the Hindu College, in the presence of Prasannacoomar Tagore, Dwarkanath Tagore, Sir Edward Ryan, Radhakanta Deb, Matilal Seal, Dr. Goodeve and others, on 14 June 1839. Addressing the distinguished gathering on this occasion, Hare emphasized the necessity of cultivating and diffusing the knowledge of Bengali, which was steadily replacing the use of Persian in all judicial and revenue matters under the dispensation of Act XXIX of 1837.

PROMOTER OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

That Hare was very appreciative of the necessity of promoting the knowledge of medical science in the country is demonstrably proved by the active role he played, together with Dwarkanath Tagore and others, in the establishment of the Medical College in Calcutta on 1 June 1835. For some time Secretary to the Medical College, he was also one of those who encouraged medical students to overcome their reluctance to dissect human bodies. It was, of course, unquestionable that Hare, who distributed medicine free of cost to the ailing, would take a keen interest in the progress of the Medical College.

AVERSION FOR PROSELYTIZATION

Himself a devout Christian, Hare was opposed, like Radhakanta Deb, to the Christian missionaries' policy of gaining converts in educational institutions. Like Rammohun Roy, he welcomed the mental and moral elevation of the country's youths through proper education, no matter who imparted it, but he felt very distressed when Christian missionaries in the guise of educators trained the mystifying guns of their religion upon the unsuspecting and impressionable minds of their pupils. "His inveterate hostility to the Gospel" cost him the goodwill of orthodox Christians, who despised him as a Hindu, while the Hindus, who had unshakeable confidence in his wisdom, goodness and impartiality, gave him a permanent niche in their grateful hearts. Because of his opposition to proselytization, Hare, who was denied burial in a Christian cemetery, had to be interred near his beloved Hindu College and Pataldanga School, with a large number of Hindus, including Radhakanta Deb, quietly standing by to pay their last homage to him in tears.

RESULTS OF HIS EFFORTS

Hare was right when he prophesied in 1831 that the sapling of education, which had already taken deep root in the country to his immense satisfaction, would surely grow into a huge tree which nothing would be able to uproot after ten years. By 1840, quite a large number of students had mastered both English and Bengali. In addition to opening schools on their own, they edited journals with a view to diffusing knowledge and combating evils of all kinds, composed poems, organized useful meetings and societies, voiced the interests of their countrymen in their speeches and writings. The awakening

had come, and the deeper stirring—the craving of the soul for freedom—was bound to follow in time.

The grateful ex-students of the Hindu College, openly acknowledging the excellent services of Hare to India which he had made his own home, requested him in a letter, dated 17 February 1831, to agree to sit for his portrait. Among the 565 signatories were Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Krishnamohan Banerjéa, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Radhanath Sikdar, Ramgopal Ghosh, Madhab Chandra Ghose, Ramtanu Lahiri and Peary Chand Mitra, the biographer of David Hare. Derozio was so much moved by this gesture of the 'Young Bengal' group that he dedicated a beautiful sonnet to them, wherein occurs the inspiring line: "Guide on, young men; your course is well begun.".

LOVER OF FREEDOM AND HATER OF EXPLOITATION

That Hare, who always encouraged students to participate in free discussions and debates, would not be able to tolerate any restriction either on the freedom of the Press or on holding public meetings was natural. Thus he took part in the agitation which ultimately led to the restoration of the freedom of the Press by Act XI of 1835. The 5th of January (1835), the day on which a public meeting was held at the Town Hall in condemnation of these restrictions, was hailed by him as "a proud day for India".

Hare participated in the deliberations of the public meeting held at the Town Hall on 8 July 1835 to devise measures calculated to secure trial by jury in civil cases in the Supreme Court as well as to consider the expediency of extending the Jury system throughout the country. He was appointed a member of the Committee set up to "prepare the draft of Act or suggestions to be forwarded with the petition to the Governor-General in Council" regarding this matter.

He also took part in the agitation against the British practice of collecting Indian *coolies* (indentured labour) at Pataldanga before sending them out to Mauritius, British Guiana, Trinidad and Ceylon. At the Town Hall meeting of 10 July 1838 the Government was requested to investigate into this evil practice connected with the system of emigration of Indian labour on the basis of contract. An enquiry committee was set up and on the basis of its findings Act XIV was passed on 1 July 1839, which, among other things, provided for the punishment of those who aided or abetted the emigration

of Indian labour in revolting conditions. Incidentally, the system of sending out indentured labour was revived by law from 1842.

When the British India Society was established in England in 1839 with George Thompson as one of its prominent members, a large meeting was held in Calcutta to cooperate with that Society. Hare attended the meeting and seconded the resolution moved to that effect by Raja Kali Krishna Deb.

Hare's many generous benefactions, small and large, put him in straitened circumstances towards the end of his life. To help him in his distress Lord Auckland had him appointed in March 1840 as the third Commissioner in the Court of Requests after the promotion of Rasamay Datta.

The friend, guide and philosopher of the young and the old alike, David Hare had made his name into a household word in Bengal. Commonly known as "the father of English education" in India, he died on 1 June 1842.

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RASAMAY DATTA

An amalgam of orthodox Hinduism and Young Bengal, Rasamay Datta, son of Nilmani Datta, was born in a rich and aristocratic family of Rambagan in Calcutta in 1779. Well-versed in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, he was noted for his mastery over English. Starting his career as a book-keeper in Davidson & Co., he was the first native to be appointed to the high judicial office of Judge of the Small Causes Court.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

His chief title to fame, however, rests on his endeavour to promote English education in Bengal. A moving spirit behind the new educational movement of his time, he was one of the founders

of the Hindu College. He also cooperated with Prasannacoomar Tagore in founding the Hindu College Pathsala in 1839 to promote the cause of vernacular education. His importance in the field of education can be gauged from the fact that he was for some time Secretary not only to the Council of Education but also to the Sanskrit College.

As a member of the Managing Committee of the Calcutta School Book Society as well as of the Calcutta School Society, he helped the spread of education among the poorer classes.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Rasamay Datta was not prone to politics. It was because of his opposition that discussion of politics found no room in the forum of the *Gaudiya Samaj* in 1823. But he was not aloof from the political life of the country. He took part in the agitation against the imposition of the stamp duty within the boundary of Calcutta, colonisation by Europeans and their right of succession (see Supplement to the Government Gazette of 26 April 1827 and the Samachar Durpan of 12 May 1827). It can also be gathered from the Calcutta Gazette of 17 April 1832 that he participated in the agitation launched to secure trial by Jury in Civil cases in Supreme Court as well as to promote the extension of the Jury system throughout the country.

Rasamay actively supported the public demand for the removal of all restraints imposed on the freedom of the Press as well as on holding public meetings under Adam's Regulation III of 1823. At the public meeting of 5 January 1835, he stressed the importance of a free Press as the only means of creating an understanding between the Government and the people. The galling restrictions were removed by Act XI of 1835.

One of the pioneers of modern Bengal, his life came to a close on 14 May 1854.

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RADHAKANTA DEB

A towering personality and an embodiment of cautious progress in Bengal in the first half of the nineteenth century, Radhakanta Deb, son of Raja Gopimohan Deb, was born on 10 March 1783. His grandfather, Munshi (afterwards Maharaja) Nabakrishna Deb, was the Persian Secretary to Lord Clive.

Radhakanta received his elementary education at Mr. Cumming's Calcutta Academy. He learnt Sanskrit and Persian under pandits and maulavis and, in course of time, mastered these languages by zealous study and constant intercourse with scholars.

Affluence offered him the means not only for the revival of of Sanskrit learning, but also for the diffusion of English education.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

The Hindu College is immeasurably beholden to Radhakanta Deb, who, after succeeding his father, Gopimohan, in the Managing Committee, in 1818, strove hard to make it live up to the laudable purpose for which it had been founded on 20 January 1817. Under his jealous care this institution, which was born in scantiness, acquired wealth as it progressed (*nascitur exiguus, sed opes acquirit eunde*—see Government Gazette, 23 January 1817). The increasing number of brilliant minds produced by this College ever since its inception constituted not only its wealth but also the wealth of the whole land.

Radhakanta had a big hand in framing the rules and regulations of the College. During his 32-year-long and fruitful association with the College, he always insisted that the study and morals of the students should be the primary concern of the teachers. As Derozio's teaching was believed to have exercised an influence subversive of the Hindu way of life, notwithstanding its contribution to original thinking on the part of his students, he was dismissed from the Hindu College on 25 April 1831 under pressure of Radhakanta and his associates, to whom the immoderation then rampant in the 'Young Bengal' group was *bête noire*. Radhakanta had no quarrel with Tom Paine's Age of Reason, the Bible of the Derozians, but what exasperated him was the grossly offensive manner in which young men delighted to show contempt for Hindu customs and taboos, without caring for the sentiments of their elders. Even a liberal like Ram-mohun Roy could not hide his disapproval of the excesses indulged in by Hindu College students. Their irreverence for Hindu deities and

their intemperance steeled the resolution of Radhakanta to select only such professors for the College who could inculcate upon the students the true values of English education without undermining the moral foundation of the Hindu society.

Ever ready to promote the cause of both vernacular and English education, Radhakanta eagerly came forward to help the School Book Society, established on 4 July 1817, prepare and compile suitable textbooks in Bengali. That apart, as the honorary Indian Secretary to the Managing Committee of the School Society, established by the School Book Society on 1 September 1818, he, together with David Hare, the European Secretary, and others, was considerably responsible for improving the existing institutions and preparing intelligent pupils for the duties of teachers. Among the many new vernacular and English schools opened by the Society, the one at Thuntunea, having both English and Bengali departments, and the other at Pataldanga, which was exclusively an English school, were amalgamated and placed under the care of David Hare at the end of 1834 following the failure of Mackintosh & Co, the Treasurers of the Society. As Government aid could be obtained only for this amalgamated school, which in future became known as the Hare School, the Society, in spite of the best efforts of Radhakanta, had to close down its vernacular schools for want of funds.

As a member of the *Gaudiya Samaj* of 1823, he cooperated with the most liberal among his compatriots to further the cause of education.

Aware of the importance of the study of science on the part of Indian students, he found no fault with those who dissected human bodies in the Medical College. He liberally subscribed to the public fund raised for sending Indian youths to England for higher studies in medicine and surgery. He himself advanced the cause of scientific investigation by publishing useful papers on the agriculture of the 24-Parganas in the Transactions of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India, of which he was for some time the Vice-President. He earned some reputation in this sphere of knowledge by transmitting to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, in 1832, the English translation, done by himself, of an extract from a horticultural work in Persian.

VERNACULAR TO BE THE MEDIUM OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

When, in 1859, the Bengal Government sought the opinion of

European and Indian educationists on Lord Stanley's proposal that vernacular should be made the medium of school education in India, Radhakanta, who had been a member of the General Committee of Public Instruction from 1835 to 1837 and again from 1841 to 1844, very forcefully opined that the establishment of agricultural and industrial schools in order to qualify the masses for enlightened membership in society was contingent upon their using to advantage the fruits of a solid vernacular education. He condemned the prevailing system which weaned youths, with a smattering of English, from the "plough, the axe and the loom" and made them hanker after clerkships in Government and mercantile offices. Those who were turned away from these offices were unable to return to their parental trade because they had learnt nothing of it.

FEMALE EDUCATION

Bethune once complimented Radhakanta Deb as being the first Hindu to promote female education in the country. Radhakanta believed that no moral regeneration of society was possible if women were allowed to remain steeped in crass ignorance and superstition. As the Indian Secretary to the School Society, he took a keen interest in female education and helped Pandit Gaurmohan Vidyalankar to prepare and publish a pamphlet entitled *Stri-Siksha-Vidhayaka* (1822). But he saw no need on the part of respectable families to send their daughters to schools, as they could be easily educated at home by tutors. So, when Miss Cooke came to India in 1821, as a representative of the British School Society, to educate Hindu women, she was advised by Radhakanta to set up schools for poor girls only and to give them vocational training as well. He, however, agreed to support the Calcutta Female School, opened by Bethune on 7 May 1849, on condition that no attempt was made to preach Christianity to the students.

HOSTILITY TO MISSIONARY PROSELYTIZATION

That educational institutions offered an excellent scope to Christian missionaries for proselytization was not wholly an ungrounded fear. Juvenile conversions had become quite frequent owing to the clever exploitation by the missionaries of the credulity of some impressionable minds and of the sceptical attitude of others towards Hindu orthodoxy. This was the reason why Radhakanta refused to have William Adam, a quondam missionary turned

Unitarian under the influence of Rammohun Roy, on the teaching staff of the Hindu College. His hostility to missionary activity in the field of education became sharper particularly after the conversion of Krishnamohan Banerjea, Mahesh Chandra Ghosh, Madhusudan Dutt and Jnanendramohan Tagore, who were all students of the Hindu College.

To this activity of the missionaries the first Hindu counterblast was seen in the launching of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* in 1843, of which Debendranath Tagore was the guiding spirit and Radhakanta the strongest pillar. And to counteract the influence of the free missionary schools, the enlightened Hindus, under the leadership of Radhakanta, Debendranath and Harimohan Sen, founded on 1 March 1846 the Hindu Charitable Institution, with Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya as the Head Master.

Increasing Government patronage for the Hindu College, with its concomitant protection for Indian converts, led to the resignation of Radhakanta Deb from its Managing Committee in June 1850. The General Committee of Public Instruction, as Radhakanta complained, had reduced the Hindu members of the College Managing Committee into nonentities by encroaching on their privileges. Thus, realizing the dangers inherent in Government patronage, Radhakanta, Debendranath Tagore, Matilal Seal, Rajendra Datta and many other well-known Hindus combined to found the Metropolitan College on 2 May 1853, with Capt. D. L. Richardson as the Principal. This was the first national college for Bengal, but, unfortunately, it languished into a mere school by 1858 for paucity of funds.

REVIVED SANSKRIT LEARNING

Radhakanta's eight volumes of the Sanskrit lexicon called the *Sabdakalpadruma*, which he took more than forty years to complete, are a living testimony to his industry, application and profound knowledge of Sanskrit. Learned societies of Europe, including the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, and even the crowned heads of Europe vied with each other to confer honours upon him in appreciation of his monumental work. Aware of the cultural heritage of India, he worked hard to resuscitate it through the study of Sanskrit. His view of India's cultural greatness could not be thrown out of focus by any British honour, like the Raja Bahadur or the K.C.S.I.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As one of the leading members of the Landholders' Society formed in 1838, Radhakanta took an active part in the agitation against Government's resumption of Lakhiraj lands, and sponsored, in cooperation with Dwarkanath Tagore, the proposal which led to the appointment of George Thompson as the Society's Political Agent in London. Later, in 1851, when the British Indian Association was established to air the views and grievances of Indians, he became its President and was more proud of this office than the title of Raja Bahadur. He fully believed, as his letter of 7 November 1851 to Debendranath Tagore shows, that this Association would be able to promote the political and economic interests of India.

European agitation against the proposed "Black Act" of Sir Barnes Peacock in 1857, who, like Bethune, wanted to bring British-born Europeans under the jurisdiction of the mofussil Faujdari Courts as well, led to the second Indian counter-agitation in which Radhakanta Deb, President of the British Indian Association, played an important role. On this matter involving the unhappy issue of racial discrimination, Radhakanta, who was then ill, expressed his opinion in an inspiring message which was read before the Town Hall meeting held under the leadership of Kissory Chand Mitra, Digambar Mitra and George Thompson on 6 April 1857. After pointing out the objectionable features of the Penal Code under which European British subjects who, for all acts of a criminal nature, could be tried, not by any Faujdari Court in the mofussil, but by the Supreme Court alone, he stated that, in spite of the imperfections of the mofussil Courts, there was no justification for the maintenance of "one Penal Code for Whites and another for the Blacks, one for the Christians and another for the Heathens". He then characterized the proposed enactment as a "refulgent White Act" under which justice would be dispensed "with an even hand to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects".

In the sensational trial of the Rev. James Long at the Criminal Sessions of the Supreme Court, in July 1861, over the publication of the English rendering of Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nil-Darpan*, the Hindu community headed by Radhakanta presented an address to Long, signed by forty-three other gentlemen, approving of what he had done in connection with the indigo problem. Greater was the sensation when, in course of the trial, Justice Sir Mordaunt Wells cast aspersions on the character of Indians. They held a protest

meeting at the residence of Radhakanta and sent a petition in 1862 to Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, urging upon him the recall of Wells. Wells was, however, censured by Wood for his "indiscreet loquacity". Besides, Wood bowed to the feelings of the Indian agitators by declining to approve of the laws designed to safeguard the interests of the European indigo planters in India.

Appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1835, Radhakanta believed that Indians could shape very well as judicial officers if given proper opportunities. That they had already proved their capacity in this sphere of administration was pointed out by him in his letter to Sir Edward Hyde East on 22 June 1836.

CONCLUSION

His opposition to the abolition of the custom of *Sati* or to the Lex Loci Act (XXI of 1850), which allowed Indian Christians to succeed to their inheritance when their fathers died intestate, cannot determine his place in the history of Indian regeneration. Nor does it conclusively prove that he was a prisoner of his nursery inhibitions. A man who had the courage to invite Europeans to dinner at his house when the family deity was being worshipped was certainly not a hide-bound conservative. A man who could boldly incur the displeasure of the bigoted Hindus by holding in high esteem an influential Bengali gentleman, who had been to England "for the good of his country", was certainly not a slave of the creed in which he had been cradled. If seen in the correct perspective, his contributions to the cause of education as well as to the moral and political regeneration of his countrymen, his support of the 'temperance pledge' movement and his own profound scholarship entitle him to a very high place in the history of renascent Bengal. In the opinion of the Rev. Krishnamohan Banerjea, Radhakanta was far "in advance of his equals in age", if judged by the spirit and ideas of the time. The benefactor of many worthy institutions and persons and an enlightened orthodox, he died at Brindaban on 19 April 1867.

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RAMKAMAL SEN

Son of Gokul Chandra Sen, Ramkamal Sen was born on 15 March 1783 at Gariffa in the 24-Parganas. Self-taught, he acquired a remarkable proficiency in the English language. It was at the Hindusthan Press, where he worked as a compositor in 1804, that his talents were discovered by Dr. H. H. Wilson, the reputed Orientalist. He did many odd jobs—e.g., clerk and later Native Secretary to the Asiatic Society, head of the native establishment of the Mint where Dr. Wilson was the Assay Master—before obtaining the responsible position of Dewan to the Bank of Bengal.

PROMOTER OF MENTAL AWAKENING

A pioneer of English education, Ramkamal was actively associated with the leading educational institutions of his time. He was a member of the Hindu College Managing Committee, Secretary and Superintendent of the Sanskrit College, a member of the Managing Committee of the School Book Society as well as of the Parental Academy (subsequently called the Doveton College). Because of his experience and earnest interest in educational matters, he was made a member of the General Committee of Public Instruction in 1839. His biggest contribution to education in Bengal was his 'English Bengali Dictionary', which he started compiling as Deputy Librarian of the Asiatic Society in 1817 (see Government Gazette of 20 January 1817). Its publication was encouraged by the Government on the recommendation of the Council of the College of Fort William (see the Fourth Supplement to the Government Gazette of 3 July 1817). His collaborator in this venture was Felix Carey, who,

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unfortunately, died in 1822. The Dictionary, when published, was a quarto volume of 700 pages.

Very circumspect in his support of the cause of progress, Ramkamal, who freely mixed with Europeans in spite of his being a Vaishnava, could not stand the irreligious and sceptical attitude of the English-educated students of the Hindu College. The growth of this attitude among students was ascribed by the Hindu members of the College Managing Committee, led by Ramkamal, to the influence of Derozio, who was thus removed from the College teaching staff in 1831.

Ramkamal had no quarrel with the cause of diffusing useful knowledge, including the knowledge of European science, in English among his countrymen. His contributions to the Journals of the Asiatic Society and Agri-Horticultural Society, together with the spadework he did as a member of the Fever Hospital Committee for the establishment of the Calcutta Medical College in 1835, testify to his liberal attitude towards Western education.

PROMOTER OF VERNACULAR EDUCATION

Despite his espousal of the cause of English education, he was never found indifferent to the need of spreading knowledge through the Bengali language. As Secretary to the *Gaudiya Samaj* founded in March 1823, he sponsored the move for the promotion of knowledge in the Bengali language. He helped the School Book Society also in the task of spreading education in the vernacular. In 1839, he came forward as one of the sponsors of the Hindu College Pathshala the purpose of which was to impart education to boys in Bengali. Special importance came to be attached to the cultivation of the Bengali language with the growing demand of the leaders of society for the replacement of Persian by Bengali in all court proceedings. The landlords also, led by Ramkamal Sen and Prasannacoomer Tagore, earnestly pleaded for this change. And the Government gradually effected this change by Act XXIX of 1837 and Act XII of 1843.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As a prominent member of the Landholders' Society (1838), Ramkamal added his powerful voice to the articulate agitation against the Government's policy of resuming rent-free lands. At the Lakhrajars' meeting held at the Town Hall on 30 November 1839 under the presidency of Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal strongly pleaded

for the appointment of an agent in London who could keep the British public informed of Indian rights and grievances.

Ramkamal Sen, who also promoted the cause of social regeneration by condemning some of the diabolical religious practices of the Hindus, passed away on 2 August 1844. Rightly did 'The Friend of India' write in its obituary notice of 15 August 1844: "To him belongs the credit of having taken a leading part in the efforts which were made for the diffusion of knowledge among his countrymen at a period when Lord Hastings, for the first time, repudiated the idea that the ignorance of the people was the firmest safeguard" of the British Empire.

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RAMCHANDRA VIDYABAGISH

Son of Lakshminarayan Tarkabhusan, Ramchandra Vidyabagish was born in a village named Malpara in 1786. Hariharananda Tirthaswami, the mendicant friend of Rammohun Roy, was his eldest brother.

Ramchandra grew into a great Sanskrit scholar after mastering the Smriti Shastras, the Upanishads and the Vedanta. He lectured for some time on the monotheistic doctrines of the Vedanta at the Vedanta College established by Rammohun Roy. On 14 May 1827, the Government appointed him Smriti Professor at the Sanskrit College. But after ten years he was dismissed by the Government in May 1837 for having given an erroneous opinion to the Governor-General in Council on a law suit concerning Viswambar Pandit, a zamindar in Benares. Though he got himself vindicated after appealing to the Court of Directors, he, nevertheless, failed to persuade the authorities to reinstate him. However, he was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College on 1 January 1842. He held this post until his illness in 1844.

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Date



SOCIAL REGENERATION

Ramchandra was for a long time associated with Rammohun Roy's activities in Calcutta. A believer in the unity of the Godhead, he helped Rammohun to carry on his disputations with the idolaters in Calcutta. Because of his learned discourses on monotheism at the meetings of the *Atmiya Sabha*, he was appointed the first Minister of the *Brahmo Samaj* when it was established in 1828. The progress of the *Brahmo Samaj*, which checked the conversion of Hindus to Christianity, owed much to his zealous efforts. In December 1843 he formally initiated twenty-one young men, including Debendranath Tagore, to Brahmoism.

In company with the English-educated liberals Ramchandra also came forward to support some of the progressive movements initiated by them in Bengal. Though he lined up with the pro-*Sati* petitioners in 1830, thereby incurring the displeasure of Rammohun Roy, yet later he proved how eager he was to alleviate the miseries and sufferings of Hindu womanhood by openly expressing himself in favour of widow remarriage when his opinion was sought by the Bengal British India Society. In his *Niti-Darsan* lectures also he advocated the reform of the Hindu marriage system through the abolition of polygamy. For this bold advocacy of his he was ranked at the head of Hindu reformers by a contemporary writing in the 'Bengal Hurkara' and 'India Gazette' of 11 March 1845.

His endeavour to promote the cause of his people's moral uplift and regeneration is clearly reflected in his *Niti-Darsan* lectures delivered to the advanced students of the Hindu College Pathsala between 1840 and 1841.

PROMOTER OF VERNACULAR EDUCATION

In 1818 he compiled a Bengali dictionary which was highly commended by the Calcutta School Book Society. After observing "in private correspondence and public documents written in Bengalee the deficiency of his countrymen... in orthology," he collected many Bengalee words, derived from Sanskrit and in common use, and published them with their definitions and synonyms.

He was associated with the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* (a name chosen by him), which tried to promote, among other things, the Bengali language and its literature.

But it was his speech delivered on the opening day (18 January 1840) of the Hindu College Pathsala that put him in clear relief as

a patriotic promoter of the Bengali language. He told the audience, including many children, that it was through the proper cultivation of the Bengali language alone that their cultural heritage could be recaptured and enriched. And it was through Bengali, which children learnt from their cradle, that knowledge could be best imparted to them. He added that the aim of the institution would be realized the day its educated students went out to every village, to every town and to every home as well-meaning teachers in British-dominated India.

This institution, where Ramchandra served for six months as the chief Pandit, had the support of David Hare, Prasannacoomar Tagore, and many other distinguished men. It was established at a time when the Government had taken the decision to replace the use of Persian by Bengali in all court proceedings.

Ramchandra occupies his own seat in the hierarchy of those who rejuvenated Bengal. He died on 2 March 1845.

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BHABANI CHARAN BANDYOPADHYAYA

Born in 1787, Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyaya was the eldest son of Ramjay Bandyopadhyaya. He grew into a very intelligent young man of considerable learning. He served in different European firms as well as under many European individuals, including Bishop Reginald Heber, as either *Sircar* or *Mutsuddi*. Bishop Heber, particularly, liked him very much for his dignified bearing and his ability to speak good English. He knew Persian as well. Because of his high standing in society, he was enlisted in the Petty Jury in April 1828.

His first love, however, was journalism. He worked on the weekly, *Sambad Kaumudi*, for some time from 4 December 1821, but left it after the issue of its thirteenth number, as he could not accept the religious views of Rammohun Roy and his associate, Harihar Datta. He, then, set up a press at Colootola and began to issue from 5 March 1822 his own weekly, *Samachar Chundrika*. It was the most

powerful organ of the orthodox Hindus and came out twice a week from April 1829.

PROMOTER OF NATIONAL FEELING

A conspicuous figure in the orthodox camp and guided, like Radhakanta Deb, by the dictates of his conscience and not by any consideration of convenience, Bhabani Charan may be deemed to have contributed indirectly to the growth of national feeling in the country by whipping up the enthusiasm of the overwhelming majority of the Hindus for the cause of preventing the abolition of the *Sati* custom. The *Samachar Chundrika* and the *Dharma Sabha*, which was set up in January 1830, with Bhabani Charan as Secretary, to counterbalance the *Brahma Sabha*, offered him the forums necessary to awaken and stimulate the mass conscience against the anti-*Sati* movement. Though the *Dharma Sabha's* petitions against Regulation XVII of 1829—one to the Governor-General and the other to the King-in-Council—were rejected, these succeeded in inflaming the feelings of the people against the British Government as well as in promoting in them a sense of oneness accentuated by the need of protecting and preserving their religion.

In 1827, he, together with Chandra Kumar Tagore and others, took part in the agitation against the stamp duty levied in Calcutta under Regulation XII of 1826.

Bhabani Charan also played no inconsiderable part, through his paper and the *Dharma Sabha*, in stirring up the wrath of the orthodox section against the proposed plan of inviting European 'character' and 'capital' to India. Essentially a plan of colonization advocated by Rammohun Roy and his supporters, it could not be carried out because of the unbending opposition of the *Dharma Sabha* and its mouthpiece, the *Samachar Chundrika*. An impassioned appeal, distinctly tinged with patriotism, was particularly made by the *Samachar Chundrika*, on 9 February 1833, to the zamindars to invest more money both in land and business with a view to preventing the colonization and exploitation of the country by foreigners.

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL FEELING

As a member of the *Gaudiya Samaj* formed in 1823, Bhabani Charan fully subscribed to its policy of promoting the Bengali language as well as helping the diffusion of knowledge in the country. On the express desire of Rasamay Datta neither any discussion on

politics nor any criticism of Hinduism was allowed in the *Samaj*. Its proceedings were carried on strictly in Bengali. It was an organization which bound together by patriotic feelings men of diverse views and inclinations, such as Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Lakshminarayan Mukhopadhyaya, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen, Rasamay Datta, Ramjay Tarkalankar and Tarinicharan Mitra. Though short-lived, the *Samaj* had some useful books translated into Bengali.

When the Seal's Free College was established in Calcutta in 1843 for the welfare of the Hindu society, the *Dharma Sabha* is said to have supplied the motivation to Matilal Seal.

Bhabani Charan, himself well-versed in English, was never against English education, but what he could never tolerate was the immoderation of the English-educated students of the Hindu College. Even Rammohun Roy did not like it. Nor was it liked by Radhakanta Deb, the leader of the orthodox group. To scoff at Hindu manners and customs because of knowing English was an attitude that characterized the 'Young Bengal' group, and Bhabani Charan could never forgive them despite all their learning. To learn to spite one's own society by imbibing wine together with English hurt his patriotic sentiments.

SERVICE TO BENGALI LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

A peerless satirist of his time, Bhabani Charan exposed the evils of Calcutta society in his novels, *Kalikata Kamalalaya*, *Nabababu Bilas*, *Duti Bilas* and *Nababibi Bilas*. Actually, in *Kalikata Kamalalaya* and *Nabababu Bilas* he ridiculed and roundly condemned Young Bengal, who had fallen a prey to evils unknown in the past.

These satires, in addition to his other works, constituted, by virtue of their lucidity of style and pungency of flavour, a milestone in the evolution of Bengali fiction.

Though an influential figure in Hindu society in the first half of the nineteenth century and the most energetic coadjutor of Raja Radhakanta Deb in the concerted endeavour to restrain the modernism of the English-educated progressives, Bhabani Charan has not been able to leave any permanent mark on the history of reascent Bengal, because his ideas and deeds came to be over-shadowed, after his death, by those of the 'Young Bengal' group. His life is a lesson on patriotic love of the culture of the motherland. Looked upon as "one of the ablest men of the age," he died on 20 February 1848.

by a jury at the option of either plaintiff or defendant". Though Regulation VI of 1832 permitted the trial of civil cases by an Indian jury wherever necessary, in practice, however, the Regulation remained a dead letter because, as the Government declared, Indians competent enough to serve as civil jurors could not be found anywhere. In June 1832, Chandra Kumar, Dwarkanath Tagore, Harakumar Tagore, Harimohan Tagore, Nandalal Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Rasamay Datta and a few others were included in the list of persons qualified to serve on juries in the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William, but they were, in practice, not associated with the trial of civil cases, in spite of the fact that the majority of them, including Chandra Kumar, had been serving on juries in the Supreme Court since April 1827. However, the dent was made in British exclusiveness and the ground was prepared for the advent of more favourable changes in the future.

Amiable but unbending in resolution, honest and hardworking, Chandra Kumar Tagore did his duty to his countrymen. An exemplary character for Young Bengal, he passed away on 19 September 1832.

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RADHAMADHAB BANDYOPADHYAYA

Born about 1787 (?), Radhamadhab Bandyopadhyaya was the son of Fakir Chand Bandyopadhyaya, who had become wealthy by working as a Dewan to the Patna Opium Agency.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Business enterprise was in the blood of the family in which Radhamadhab was born. His own enterprising spirit led him to join hands with Ramdulal De, Rasamay Datta, Radhakanta Deb and a few others in establishing in 1818 a Society for clearing jungles in

the Gangasagar Island and preparing its soil for cotton cultivation. Unfortunately, their efforts proved abortive and the scheme was ultimately abandoned. This failure did not, however, damp Radhamadhab's enthusiasm for business. Conforming to the feeling, as expressed in some contemporary vernacular journals, that rich zamindars should shed their indolence and take to business in order to preserve and increase the national wealth, Radhamadhab, like Dwarknath Tagore and Rustomjee Cowasjee, came forward to encourage the development of banking in the country. He thus became actively associated with the General Bank and the Union Bank, both established in 1829. Though he retired from the General Committee of the Union Bank in July 1831, his interest in business remained as keen as before. In 1833, he, together with many enterprising Bengalees and Europeans, sponsored the New Bengal Steam Fund Committee's scheme of steamship navigation between Europe and India which, unfortunately, failed to materialize. Nevertheless, Radhamadhab's enterprising spirit proved to be a source of inspiration to his countrymen.

MENTAL AWAKENING

As a member of the Hindu College Managing Committee, Radhamadhab took a keen interest in the welfare and progress of its students. Like Radhakanta Deb, Rasamay Datta and Ramkamal Sen, he was one of the early well-wishers of the College. As one of the founder-Managers of the institution, he was present on the day of its opening on 20 January 1817.

He wanted the spread not only of English education but also of vernacular education. Thus, as a member of the Hindu College Managing Committee, he, in cooperation with Prasannacoomar Tagore and others, actively sponsored the founding of the Hindu College Pathshala on 14 June 1839. His own zeal for promoting the vernacular language and its literature was proven by his subscribing to the aims of the *Gaudiya Samaj* of 1823, of which he was an important member. He also contributed his mite to the establishment of the Hindu Charitable Institution in March 1846.

In recognition of his ability and high standing in society, he was appointed Honorary Magistrate in May 1835, together with Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Ramkamal Sen, Raj Chandra Das, Rasamay Datta and Rustomjee Cowasjee. A man of charitable disposition and one of the founder-members of the

Dharma Sabha, Radhamadhab Bandyopadhyaya died on 25 December 1852.

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RAMLOCHAN GHOSH

Though well-known for his progressive views in his day, Ramlochan Ghosh is now overshadowed by the achievements of his illustrious sons, Manomohan Ghosh and Lalmohan Ghosh. But there is no gainsaying the fact that he, together with others, did much of the spadework in different fields of activities which positively helped the rebirth of Bengal as well as the advent of political consciousness.

Born in a village named Bairagadi near Dacca in 1790, Ramlochan taught himself English and joined the Judge's Court at Patna as Serishtadar. Later he worked in the same capacity in the Sadar Board of Revenue in Calcutta. In 1841, he was appointed by the Government as Principal Sadar Amin in Krishnagar.

MENTAL AWAKENER

Ramlochan's contribution to the mental progress of his countrymen is not inconsiderable. When the Committee of Public Instruction opened the Dacca English Seminary on 15 July 1835, he was so immensely delighted that he contributed Rs. 1,000/- for the effective use of all available means to diffuse knowledge, particularly that of the English language. His visit to the institution in 1836 convinced him that it would be able to spread enlightenment among his countrymen. On 20 November 1841 this Seminary was converted into a college.

With time his zeal for the cause of education increased. In November 1845 he helped the collection of funds for the proposed Krishnagar College and thereby facilitated its establishment on 1 January 1846. Because of his intelligent interest in education, he was made a member of the Local Committee at Krishnagar. Such Committees were in those days set up in the mofussil by the Government to supervise its institutions.

The progress of female education in Nadia owes much to his

sincere endeavour. To widen further the scope of education for the young he had a public library established in Krishnagar.

VERNACULAR EDUCATION

The cause of vernacular education also was very near his heart. In 1843, he suggested to the Council of Education that a vernacular *pathsala*, like the Hindu College *Pathsala*, be opened under the supervision of the Dacca College to help spread the knowledge of literature and science through the Bengali language. He expressed his willingness to donate Rs. 1,000/- if his suggestion were accepted. But, unfortunately, the Council of Education refused to oblige him.

He had earlier suggested in 1843 that two Bengalees of Calcutta or its neighbourhood be appointed in the Dacca Seminary to help the local youths to cultivate properly the Bengali language, particularly its pronunciation.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As a founder-member of the *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha* of 1836, Ramlochan can claim much of the credit for establishing the first political organization in the country. After getting Gaurisankar Tarkabagish's proposal to discuss religion in the Sabha negated, he, in collaboration with Kalinath Roy Choudhury, converted it into a forum of political discussion by drawing the attention of its members, at a meeting held in December 1836, to the Government's resumption of rent-free lands. While the majority of the members condemned the Government's policy, Ramlochan surprised them by supporting the latter. Though criticized by some as being abjectly loyal, his main contention was that the rich zamindars, dependent to a large extent on the returns from their rent-free lands, spent most of their time on the gratification of their desires. He felt that the Government's resumption of these lands would force the zamindars to cast about for new means to earn their livelihood as well as to acquire wealth. Probably the combination of easy affluence, indolence and hedonism in the zamindars of Bengal was repugnant to him. This loud thinking on his part, fearlessly publicised even at the cost of his popularity, was in keeping with the *Samachar Chundrika's* and the *Gyananneshun's* criticism of the zamindars' idle and unenterprising role in society, which enabled Europeans to drain the country of its wealth.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

By protesting against some impolitic measures of the Government he helped the political awakening of his countrymen. In April 1827, he participated in the agitation launched by Radhakanta Deb, Maharaja Siva Krishna Bahadur, Rasamay Datta, Chandra Kumar Tagore and others against the Stamp Regulation of 1826. They sent a petition to the Vice-President in Council, criticizing the legislation for having given the Government "the dangerous power of unlimited taxation" (Supplement to the Government Gazette, 26 April 1827).

He also took an active part in the agitation against the restrictions imposed on the Press under Adam's Regulation III of 1823 (Calcutta Gazette, 3 January 1835). The Town Hall meeting of 5 January 1835 condemned not only the restrictions on the Press but also those on holding public meetings. There was widespread jubilation when Metcalfe's Act XI of 1835 restored the freedom of the Press by rescinding Regulation III of 1823.

A social worker, Rustomjee Cowasjee did much for the improvement of civic life in Calcutta. A philanthropist, he was actively associated with the District Charitable Society. He passed away on 16 April 1852.

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MATILAL SEAL

Son of Chaitanyacharan Seal, a dealer in cloth, Matilal was born in Calcutta in 1792. He lost his father at the age of five. Educated at Nityananda Sen's School, he acquired enough knowledge of English with age.

BUSINESS ENTREPRENEUR

Matilal was a self-made man. It was through his enterprising business career that he became a millionaire. Beginning as a trader in empty bottles and corks, he soon embarked on bigger projects. He worked as banian to eight European firms. "A first-rate judge of country produce", he proved to be an acquisition to the firms he

served. He did not take long to realize that the business of export and import provided fertile soil for exploitation and that the English were making the most of it aided by men like him with local knowledge. It was clear to him that a native enterprise backed by better knowledge of local produce could not only compete with the English but also undersell them. He, thus, did not hesitate to stake his fortune on the bold venture of exporting indigo, silk, sugar, saltpetre, etc., and importing cotton piecegoods and iron to and from Europe at a profit. From a banian he became a business entrepreneur and, like Rustomjee Cowasjee and Dwarkanath Tagore, set the pattern for posterity to emulate in the interests of national welfare.

Engaged in overseas trade, his attention was naturally drawn towards shipping. Within a short time, he became the proud possessor of a fleet and competed with foreign liners in shipping cargo to Europe and to the Far East. An important subscriber to the New Bengal Steam Fund, he was one of the first to introduce tug steamers in coastal shipping.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

A patron of learning, he founded the Seal's Free College in 1843. He employed some Jesuits as teachers, who consented to teach on purely secular lines. Under his fostering care, the college became "one of the best conducted educational institutions in the metropolis". He was also a supporter of female education.

AVERSION FOR PROSELYTIZATION

The proselytization activities of the Christian missionaries led Matilal to join hands with Debendranath Tagore and others in establishing the Hindu Charitable Institution on 1 March 1846. He also generously helped those who founded the Hindu Metropolitan College in May 1853.

A PROGRESSIVE

A liberal, he strongly censured the stalwarts of the *Dharma Sabha* for their attempts to thwart progressive movements. He helped Vidyasagar in furthering the cause of widow marriage.

A philanthropist, he donated large sums of money for relieving the sufferings of the poor and the sick, of orphans and widows.

Matilal fully shared the political aspirations of his countrymen. In his letter to Ramgopal Ghosh he regretted his inability to attend

the Town Hall meeting of 29 July 1853 owing to illness. This meeting gave publicity to Indian grievances on the eve of the renewal of the Charter.

He passed away on 29 May 1854.

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DWARKANATH TAGORE

Dwarkanath Tagore was born in Calcutta in 1794 and brought up by his uncle and foster father, Ramlochan Tagore, a rich zamindar. Educated at Sherbourne School and influenced by the liberal ideas of Raja Rammohun Roy, he soon became a progressive force by himself in society.

The skilful management of his patrimony and the new zamindaries that he bought after 1829, his lucrative practice as law-agent to the rich zamindars of Bengal and his growing export business in indigo and silk yielded him an enormous income. Simultaneously, his reputation for honesty, ability and his legal knowledge also spread to such an extent that the Government appointed him first as Dewan to the Collector and Salt-Agent of the 24-Parganas and later, in 1829, as Dewan to the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium, a position which he voluntarily resigned, much against the wishes of the grateful Board, on 1 August 1834 on account of his multiplying business commitments. His two visits to England in 1842 and 1845 led to the promotion of the educational and political interests of his countrymen.

EMPHASIS ON BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Business and commerce constituted his first passion, and he bent all his energies for developing it, like Rustomjee Cowasjee, the pioneer of modern Indian business, presumably, as can be made out from the comments of the *Gyananimeshun* (9 August 1834) and the *Samachar Chundrika* (9 February 1833), with a view to preventing Europeans from draining India of her wealth and drawing as many Indians as possible away from agriculture to the field of commerce.

and industry, by exploiting which Britishers were able to tighten their economic hold on India. As a partner of Messrs. Mackintosh & Co and as a Director of the Commercial Bank, both of which had to be closed down in 1833, he probably realised that no progress worth the name could be made by his countrymen unless they took to business and industry and learnt to depend less on agriculture. And the postulate laid down by him for any progress in industry was the introduction of the new means of production as seen in Europe at that time, together with British 'character', capital and technical skill.

The establishment of the Union Bank on 7 August 1829 and of Messrs. Carr, Tagore & Co in 1834 testified to his faith in joint-stock enterprise and cooperative endeavour as the best means of building up big business. Like a modern entrepreneur, he took risks while expanding the business of the firm of which he was the guiding genius. The export of silk and indigo to Europe, the purchase of coal mines at Raniganj and the establishment of a sugar factory at Ramnagar, ship-building works at Kidderpore, filatures at Kamarkali and indigo factories at Selaidah not only attested his business acumen and ability, but also inspired his countrymen to make efforts, however humble, in the same direction, with financial assistance obtained from the Union Bank. Though the Bank failed in 1847 owing to the greed of the European indigo planters and their manipulations in bills of exchange, its admirable management by Dwarkanath left many valuable lessons in banking for his countrymen. Messrs. Carr, Tagore & Co also came to be wound up in January 1848, but it, like Dwarkanath's Bengal Coal Co established in 1845 in cooperation with I. D. Campbell, showed his countrymen how to retain the wealth of the land and use it for their own economic betterment. In recognition of his resounding success in the domain of business the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, established by Europeans on 17 February 1834, made him (Rustomjee Cowasjee also) a member of its Executive Committee.

SOCIAL REFORMER

A worthy follower of Raja Rammohun Roy, an ardent supporter of the *Brahmo Samaj*, a believer in the unity of the Godhead, an unbending opponent of religious bigotry, idolatry and untouchability, Dwarkanath wholeheartedly supported all the endeavours of the Raja to effect the moral regeneration of his countrymen. He was one

of the signatories to the congratulatory address, dated 16 January 1830, presented to Lord Bentinck after the abolition of the cruel custom of *Sati* by Regulation XVII of 1829.

ADVOCATE OF LIBERAL EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

An enthusiastic member of the Hindu College Managing Committee and also of the *Gaudiya Samaj* formed in 1823 to promote the cause of education, Dwarkanath stoutly stood up for the introduction of liberal Western education in order to free the minds of his countrymen from the paralysing stranglehold of irrational orthodoxy propped up by superstitions and prejudices. He also believed, as expressed in his speech delivered at the Town Hall on 18 June 1836, that with the progress of the Hindu College the attendance of the politically-conscious Indians at Town Hall meetings would definitely increase.

He also gave a tremendous impetus to the study of medical science in the country by doing the spadework for founding the Calcutta Medical College on 1 June 1835. To encourage young men to take up medical science as a subject of serious study and investigation, he donated every three years Rs. 2,000|-, which was to be used for the distribution of prizes among the most diligent and successful medical students. The General Committee of Public Instruction, in their letter of 12 April 1836, highly appreciated this noble gesture of Dwarkanath. It was Dwarkanath who, in cooperation with others, persuaded the first batch of medical students, including Madhusudan Gupta, to overcome their prejudices and fear of social obloquy and dissect dead bodies in the college on 10 January 1836. To him also goes a great part of the credit of inducing four medical students to accompany him on his second visit to England in March 1845 for higher education in surgery. They were Bholanath Bose and Gopal Lal Seal (both Dwarkanath Tagore scholars), Surya Kumar Chakrabarti (a Government scholar), and Dwarkanath Bose whose expenses were met from a fund raised by the public. Dr. R. A. Goodeve of the Medical College also joined the party and became a constant source of inspiration to the students, who returned in due course with diplomas from the Royal College of Surgeons.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Dwarkanath's contributions to the creation of political consciousness in the country cannot be underestimated. He occupies a very

high place of honour, with Rammohun Roy and others, among those valiant men who undauntedly agitated for the restoration of the freedom of the Press in the country after it had been taken away by Adam's Regulation III of 1823. The Memorial to the Supreme Court and the petition to the King-in-Council contained his signature. In spite of their rejection, the agitation against the restrictions on the Press was resumed from December 1834 by Indian and European leaders, including Dwarkanath, who, because of his proprietary interests in the Bengal Hurkaru, the Bengal Herald and the *Bangadut*, became the livewire of the movement. At a meeting held at the Town Hall on 5 January 1835 Dwarkanath seconded the resolution of Mr. Dickens, a barrister, to send a petition to the Governor-General in Council for the removal of the restrictions on the Press and holding public meetings. The petition was sent on 6 February 1835. Charles Metcalfe, the acting Governor-General, who persuaded himself to believe that a free Press could not be inimical to good government, had, with Macaulay's assistance, the Regulation of 1823 rescinded by Act XI of 1835, which came into force from 15 September of the same year. For having spent thousands on the cause of the freedom of the Press and also for manfully fighting like a patriot to attain it, Dwarkanath was paid a high tribute by Mr. H. M. Parker, who presided over the Free Press commemoration dinner in February 1838.

The Government had been publishing in its Gazette (Government Gazette called the Calcutta Gazette from 7 April 1832) every year since 3 April 1828 lists of the names of Indians qualified to serve on juries for faujdari cases in the Supreme Court. This position was further improved in July 1833 when Dwarkanath Tagore, Asutosh Deb, Rasamay Datta, Birnarasingha Mallick, Kashiprasad Ghosh and Radhamadhab Banerjee came to be nominated by Sir Edward Ryan to serve on the Grand Jury of the Supreme Court together with Europeans. But this privilege did not satisfy their aspirations as they wanted also the trial of the diwani suits in the Supreme Court by jury. On 8 July 1835 a public meeting was held, at which it was decided to petition the Governor-General in Council. A committee, with Dwarkanath as member, was set up to draft a plan, which was submitted with the petition. The plan was, however, rejected by the Government on the ground that there were not a sufficient number of men fit to act as jurors in diwani cases in the Supreme Court. A pointed reference was made in this connection

to the dearth of competent persons, which rendered impossible even the employment of Indian Jurors for diwani and faujdari cases in the district courts under Regulation VI of 1832. However, it was felt that the utility of the plan could be tested by putting it into operation on an experimental basis on the original side of the Supreme Court. The enthusiasm generated by the agitation over the issue made the educated section more conscious of the rights denied to them by the British Government. It is, thus, not without reason that Dwarkanath said in his speech of 18 June 1836 that the British Government held the lives, liberty and property of Indians at its mercy by taking away all that they had.

An outspoken critic of the cringing attitude of his countrymen, he believed that the best means of elevating their character was to educate and entrust them with greater administrative responsibilities. Thus he suggested, among other things, to the Bird Committee, set up by Lord Auckland in 1838 for devising measures to reform the mofussil police, that Government should create a new post, that of Deputy Magistrate, and offer it to educated Indians of respectable families. This gave further edge to the clamant Indian demand for more and higher responsibilities in the Company's service, which was partially met by the appointment of Indians as Deputy Magistrates under Act XV of 5 August 1843. A very relevant act on the part of the Government was the appointment of Dwarkanath as the first Indian Justice of the Peace in 1835.

Political consciousness in Bengal owes much to the Landholders' Society, which, established in April 1838 by Dwarkanath and others, carried on a vigorous agitation against the Government's resumption of rent-free lands (Lakhiraj) and sale of zamindaries on failure of the timely payment of rent. At the Lakhrajdar's meeting, held in the Town Hall under the presidency of Radhakanta Deb in 1839, Dwarkanath regretted that what had been given by the Muslim rulers from time to time for the encouragement of learning and religion were about to be taken away by a Christian Government which prided itself as the most civilized nation in the world. This agitation set aflame the imagination of the middle class youths and taught them how to fight for the basic rights of their countrymen.

Realizing that political agitation was an art demanding well-designed weapons to promote its ends, Dwarkanath brought with him to Calcutta from England towards the end of 1842 Mr. George Thompson, a member of Parliament and a fiery orator. And George

Thomson became not only the inspirer of the Bengal British India Society of 1843, but also the London agent of the Landholders' Society at the formal request of Dwarkanath, who left no stone unturned to publicize and press the Society's views upon the authorities in England.

Not a visionary but a man of action, universally respected for his breadth of vision and unbounded munificence, Dwarkanath, endearingly called the 'Prince', died in London on 1 August 1846.

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KALINATH ROY CHOUDHURY

A staunch supporter of Rammohun Roy, a man of indomitable spirit and a fearless upholder of the cause of progress in society, Kalinath Roy Choudhury, often referred to as Kalinath Munshi, was born in the rich zamindar family of Taki in 1797. Quite a good student in school, Kalinath became in course of time well-versed in English, Sanskrit, Persian and Bengali. The poems he composed in Persian and Bengali excited admiration in learned circles.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

But he was born not to serve the Muse of Poetry. Destiny had cut him out for a bigger and more useful role in society. Profoundly influenced by the progressive views of Rammohun Roy, he came

forward, ignoring all social obloquy, to prop up the *Brahmo Samaj* in 1830. He boldly subscribed to the view that there could be no progress worth the name in society as long as it remained bound in the swaddling clothes of the ancient Shastras, much of which had long outlived their utility.

A liberal in religion, Kalinath, while freely consorting with the Brahmos who condemned idolatry, performed the Durga Puja in his countryside house according to Shastric rites and rituals. But unreasonable social inhibitions, mostly stemming from the outdated Shastric injunctions, could not immure his virile, progressive and rational mind. He, thus, lent both weight and edge to the anti-*Sati* movement by openly joining hands with Rammohun Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Harihar Datta and others. Overwhelmed with delight when the cruel custom of *Sati* came to be abolished by Regulation XVII of 1829, but aware at the same time that the last ditch stand of the orthodox *Dharma Sabha* might lead to the reversal of the Government's decision, Kalinath, together with Rammohun Roy and other *Brahmo Samaj* stalwarts, presented an address of thanks to Lord Bentinck at Government House on 16 January 1830. The address in Bengali was first read and presented by Kalinath. This was followed by the presentation of the address in English. He was also a signatory to the anti-*Sati* petition which was taken by Rammohun Roy to England to counteract the influence of the pro-*Sati* petition submitted by the *Dharma Sabha* to Parliament.

But Kalinath's enthusiastic presentation of the address in Bengali to Bentinck brought a hornet's nest about his ears in Calcutta. He was virtually ostracized from Hindu society in Calcutta by the orthodox section and subjected to all kinds of social disabilities, as can be made out from a report of the 'Sumachar Durpan' quoted in 'The Government Gazette' of 27 June 1831. But the fiercer the orthodox section's opposition to his progressive views the higher rose his undaunted spirit and the stronger became his resolve to prise open the benumbing grip of useless traditions, prejudices and superstitions over the minds of his countrymen.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Kalinath realized that all well-meant efforts at regenerating his countrymen would produce no enduring results as long as their minds remained steeped in ignorance and closed to the liberal and

invigorating influence of Western literature and science. Merely combating crying social evils was not enough; the real need of the day was the spread of English education among the younger generation to enable them to develop a spirit of enquiry as well as to be self-reliant, forward-looking and enterprising.

The Taki School, established by him in cooperation with his brother, Baikunthanath Roy Choudhury, on 14 June 1832, was an eloquent testimony to his irrepressible enthusiasm for reorientating young minds, in the light of the new needs of society, through a sound English education, without, however, neglecting the teaching of Bengali, Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. At a time when the Christian missionaries were suspect in the eyes of the orthodox Hindus, Kalinath had the boldness to place the School under the supervision of the Rev. Alexander Duff, leader of the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta. It is on record that he spent about Rs. 20,000 annually on the School the interests of which were always very near his heart.

But he knew that the imperative need of spreading education for awakening his countrymen from their mental torpor could not be met by establishing one school alone. He, therefore, eagerly came forward to aid any institution which endeavoured to promote the cause of English education. The Hindu Benevolent Institution, the Hindu Free School and the Baranagore English School amply benefited from his unstinted donations.

Incidentally, Kalinath firmly believed that what his countrymen needed for their mental, moral and economic regeneration was not merely the spread of English education, but also the settlement of Europeans, with their capital, in the countryside. Inviting European 'character' and 'capital' was a belief which he had developed under the influence of Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

However humble or demure a role Kalinath might have played in awakening the political consciousness of his countrymen, his efforts in this respect cannot go unnoticed.

He had learnt from Rammohun Roy in 1823-24 that there could be no freedom of thought or of speech as long as the Press had to labour under unhealthy and throttling restrictions. It was thus not surprising to see him join hands in December 1834 with Prasannacoomar Tagore, Rustomjee Cowasjee, Rasamay Datta, Chandrasekhar

Deb and others in initiating a new agitation for the restoration of the freedom of the Press. He was one of the signatories to the petition, seeking the Calcutta Sheriff's permission to hold a public meeting for considering the propriety of petitioning the Governor-General in Council for the repeal of Adam's Regulation III of 1823. The meeting, held at the Town Hall on 5 January 1835, strengthened the Indian agitation which ultimately led to the revocation of the obnoxious Regulation by Metcalfe's Act XI of 1835.

Kalinath played a more important role in connection with the activities of the *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha* formed in December 1836. The founder-members of the *Sabha* decided at the inaugural meeting—on the proposal of Gaurisankar Tarkabagish, seconded by Kalinath—not to discuss religion. They agreed that only political and administrative matters, which were prejudicial to Indian interests, and the petitions germane to them would be taken up for threadbare discussion in the meeting of the *Sabha*. Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore and Ramlochan Ghosh were some of the strongest props of this political organization, which, on the initiative of Kalinath, discussed for the first time in a serious manner the zamindars' discontent caused by the Government's policy of resuming rent-free land (*lakhiraj*) in the country. Although the *Sabha* gave way to the Landholders' Society in March 1838, its ideals and aims continued to be upheld by the latter, of which Kalinath was also one of the founder-members. In his policy of moderate agitation, which was in keeping with the spirit of his time, as also in his forthright criticism of all unjust acts of the Government one can see the dawn of political consciousness in the country.

In courage as well as in liberality of views, in breadth of understanding as well as in munificence, in firmness of conviction as well as in leading a consistently intelligent, honest and active life, Kalinath had very few equals in society. His life of dedication, which came to a close on 12 December 1840, was a source of inspiration to many of his compatriots who laboured for the cause of national regeneration.

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GAURISANKAR TARKABAGISH

Nicknamed 'Gurgure Bhattachaj' because of his short stature, Gaurisankar Tarkabagish was one of the most powerful journalists in Bengal in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Born in Sylhet in 1799, Gaurisankar lost his father, Jagannath Bhattacharya, very early in life. Most resourceful and ambitious, he came to Naihati for education and within a short time made his mark as a great Sanskrit scholar. After finishing his studies, he came to Calcutta in search of fortune. His scholarship and penetrating mind earned him the regard of men like Rammohun Roy and Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyaya.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Essentially a journalist, having edited the Bengali edition of Young Bengal's *Gyananneshun*, the *Sambad Bhaskar*, the *Sambad Rasaraj* and the *Hinduratnakamalakar*, Gaurisankar's views on social problems were pronouncedly progressive. His writings, characterized by good sense, pungent humour and a vigorous style, were free from the trammels of Hindu superstitions and prejudices. He utilized every opportunity to expose the folly of his bigoted countrymen as well as to emphasize the necessity of cultivating European knowledge.

Though he walked over from Rammohun Roy's *Brahma Sabha* to Radhakanta Deb's *Dharma Sabha*, yet he remained steadfast in his support of the agitation for the abolition of the custom of *Sati*. His association with the *Dharma Sabha* did not, either, curb his enthusiasm for the cause of widow remarriage. When Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyaya contracted a civil marriage with Basantakumari, the widow of Maharaja Tejchand Bahadur of Burdwan, Gaurisankar acted as a witness before the Calcutta Police Magistrate.

Gaurisankar had great faith in the usefulness of English education. That explains his association with the Oriental Free School in the progress of which David Hare also took a great deal of interest. The cause of female education, in particular, found in Gaurisankar a powerful advocate. He unreservedly approved of Bethune's Hindu Female School when it came to be opened in May 1849. To him the opening of this school augured well for the country.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Gaurisankar was also a bold critic of the police administration in

the countryside. In 1837, he created a stir by exposing the misdeemeanour of the police darogah at Burdwan. This petty official not only took bribes, but also often acted, as alleged by Gaurisankar, beyond the powers given to him by Regulation IX of 1793 and Regulation XX of 1817. His criticism of the mofussil police, which agreed with that of Dwarkanath Tagore, was published at a time when the Government was considering the need of reforming and overhauling the police administration in the countryside. This work was ultimately done by the Bird Committee in 1838.

Gaurisankar was also one of the founders of the *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha* in 1836. It was the first political organization in the country. As its President for some time, he was connected with its agitation against the Government's resumption of rent-free land in the country.

He died on 5 February 1859.

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RAMANATH TAGORE

The younger brother of Dwarkanath Tagore, Ramanath Tagore was born on 26 October 1801. After receiving a sound education at Mr. Sherbourne's School, he learnt at first hand commerce and banking in the office of Messrs. Alexander & Co. In 1829 he became the Treasurer of the General Bank. A few years later he joined the Union Bank as Treasurer (Dewan) and worked there until its failure in 1847. Because of his high standing in society he was nominated a member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1866. His brilliant rhetoric in the Council Chamber was always a treat for the House. In 1873 he became a member of the Governor-General's Council.

ADVOCATE OF SOCIAL REFORM

A progressive like his brother Dwarkanath, Ramanath also wanted society to be rid of the deadweight of senseless customs and prejudices. He welcomed Bentinck's Regulation XVII of 1829, which

abolished the cruel custom of *Sati*, and was overjoyed at the Privy Council's rejection of the *Dharma Sabha's* pro-*Sati* petition. Together with Baikunthanath Roy Choudhury and Radhaprasad Roy, he sponsored a meeting at the Brahmo Samaj prayer-hall at Jorasanko on 10 November 1832 to enable the progressives to express their gratitude to the Government for having abolished the *Sati* custom.

The launching of 'The Reformer' in 1831 was a venture in which he heartily joined with his more famous cousin, Prasannacoomar Tagore, and Shyamlal Tagore. This English weekly boldly advocated the promotion of the cause of progress through the spread of education and the jettisoning of inhibiting customs and prejudices.

Many educational institutions, including the Hindu Benevolent Institution and the Hindu Charitable Institution (1846), enjoyed his patronage. He was a very active member of the Hindu College Managing Committee as well as of the General Committee of Public Instruction. Because of his unflagging interest in education he was made a Fellow of the Calcutta University.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The endeavours of Ramanath to awaken the political consciousness of his countrymen cannot be ignored. In April 1832, he, together with Rasamay Datta, David Hare, Srikrishna Singha, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Debendranath Tagore and a few others, called a public meeting "to consider the expediency of petitioning Parliament for a legislative enactment to enable parties in civil actions at law to have their cases tried by a jury at the option of either plaintiff or defendant."

As a member of the Landholders' Society, he worked hard for the attainment of its aims, and, on its abolition, took a leading part in the establishment of the British Indian Association of which he was first a Vice-President and subsequently President for ten years. He addressed and presided over many public meetings, which helped the awakening of national consciousness in the country. He emerged as a fearless critic of the British authorities when they hastily revised the Civil Service Examination Rules in 1864 and 1865 to put Indian examinees at a disadvantage. The success of Satyendranath Tagore in 1863 seemed to have frightened them into this action. As a result of the reduction of the full marks for Sanskrit from 500 to 375 just on the eve of the examination in 1864, Manomohan Ghosh had to meet with disappointment for the second time. Further, the reduction of the maximum age from 22 to 21 in 1865 slammed the door of the Civil

Service on the face of Manomohan Ghosh. The British Indian Association became very agitated over the issue and held a protest meeting in Calcutta on 19 July 1865. Ramanath Tagore, Peary Chand Mitra and Rajendralal Mitra trenchantly criticized the tendentious manipulation of the original rules of the Civil Service Examination by the British authorities. The resolution, which was unanimously adopted at the meeting, urged upon the British authorities to fix the minimum age for the Civil Service at 21 and the maximum age at 25. Ramanath Tagore and his associates then asked the Indian Society in London to carry on agitation against these manipulations. The agitation assumed a national character with the establishment of the British Indian Association's branches in Aligarh and other cities of India at this time. In March 1867, Kishore Chandra Mitra rejoiced to see the Association coming forward as a national party to "stand for the self-government and represent the wants and wishes of various people of this country." The importance of the efforts of Ramanath Tagore in this direction cannot be minimized.

As a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, Ramanath never failed to defend the rights of the agricultural community. He was thus labelled "the friend of the ryots".

Though many honours, such as the C.S.I., Raja and Maharaja, were conferred upon him by the British Government, he remained till the last day of his life a powerful spokesman of his countrymen's rights. A perfect gentleman, known for his liberalism and munificence, Ramanath Tagore passed away on 10 June 1877.

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PRASANNACOOMAR TAGORE

"We have commenced probing, and will probe on, till we discover that which will make us feel we are men in common with others, and, like them, capable of being good, great, and noble".

These inspiring words came from the expressive pen of Prasannacoomar Tagore, one of the proprietors and the editor of the 'Reformer', a weekly journal noted in the eighteen-thirties for its bold editorials on the crying social and political problems of the day. In the throbbing of a new life in the educated youths as well as in their deliberate probing into the bases of all institutions—old and new, indigenous and foreign—he saw the assurance not merely of the regeneration of Indian society, but also of its exaltation to a standard of life where Indians would no longer be looked down upon "as a race of unprincipled and ignorant people, void of all qualities that separate the human from the brute creation".

Born in 1801, Prasannacoomar was the youngest son of Gopimohan Tagore, who, like Maharaja Tejchandra Bahadur of Burdwan, was a hereditary Governor of the Hindu College. Partly educated at home and partly at Sherbourne School, he joined the Hindu College in 1817 and made his mark there as a brilliant student.

The death of his father in 1818 and the long involvement of the family in law-suits against Alexander & Co. and Baretto & Co. created liabilities, which, together with the partition of the family property on 29 June 1827, threw Prasannacoomar on his own slender resources. By working as the Dewan of the Tamluk Salt Board he earned enough money to clear off his share of the family debts.

But feeling that his 'Reformer', a weekly journal brought out on 5 February 1831, needed more of his time and attention, he relinquished his dewanship and took to business in cooperation with Messrs. Carr, Tagore & Co. Simultaneously he employed his legal knowledge at the Sadar Diwani Court to become one of the best and most prosperous pleaders on its appellate side. Because of his legal knowledge and forensic skill he was appointed a Government pleader in March 1844. On his retirement from this position in August 1850 he was succeeded by Ramaprasad Roy, son of Raja Rammohun Roy. Later, in 1854, he was appointed the Clerk-Assistant to the Governor-General's Council by Lord Dalhousie. His duty was to enlighten the Council members on Indian customs and usages likely to be affected by their intended legislation. His total annual income from his

To give further impetus to the spread of vernacular education the Hindu College Managing Committee, led by Prasannacoomar, took the initiative in founding the Hindu College Pathsala on 14 June 1839. David Hare laid the foundation-stone, and Prasannacoomar addressed the distinguished gathering in chaste Bengali. He became a member of the Committee entrusted with the task of appointing teachers for the new school, which was formally opened on 18 January 1840. The primary objects of the Pathsala, as stated in the General Report of Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency for 1843-44, were to "provide a system of National Education, and to instruct Hindoo youths in Literature and in the Science of India and Europe, through the medium of the Bengali language". Ramchandra Vidyabagish, who served the school as the chief pundit for six months at the request of Prasannacoomar, delivered his famous *Niti-Darsan* lectures here, which covered all the aspects of the nation's life in the process of regeneration. Special textbooks in Bengali were prepared, but no progress could be made in this matter from 1841 when the Government laid down that textbooks in English, duly censored and approved by the General Committee of Public Instruction, could only be translated into Bengali.

Prasannacoomar's own plans about education in English schools as well as about the preparation of textbooks are worthy of notice. These were suggested by him to the General Committee of Public Instruction in 1839-40. He wanted Indian youths, qualified in the English arts and sciences and with sufficient knowledge to express their newly acquired ideas through the vernacular, to be "trained in the combined duties of authors and teachers". He also expressed his belief that amongst the Sanskrit pundits might be found very competent persons for the office of teachers, who, if taught English, could be safely allowed to take charge of the vernacular class as well as to render good English textbooks into Bengali. This, he believed, would eventually help the establishment of "a permanent system of national education" in the country.

ADVOCATE OF FEMALE EDUCATION

He was a stout advocate of female education also. He set an example by giving the best of education to his daughter, Surasundari Devi, and his daughter-in-law, Balasundari, Jnanendramohan's first wife, who died very early in life. Disregarding prevailing prejudices

and bigotry he engaged a European tutoress for their enlightenment and for their sound education.

PROMOTER OF THE STUDY OF LAW

A patron of learning, he became a Fellow of the University of Calcutta in January 1857 and bent all his energies to the task of arousing the interest of young men in the study of law, so as to enable them to see in a clearer perspective the political and constitutional problems of the country. The creation of the Tagore Law Professorship from his princely donation to the University admirably served the end he had in view. In any assessment of the contributions of lawyers to the freedom movement in India this effort of Prasannacoomar cannot be ignored.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

His contribution to achieving the freedom of the Press is another debt the nation owes to him. He was also one of those who condemned Adam's Regulation III of 1823 and signed the petition that was submitted to the Supreme Court against it in 1824. Later, in 1835, when the agitation against this Regulation was resumed, he played an active part. Its revocation by Metcalfe's Act XI of 1835 gratified him immensely. At the Free Press Dinner of 9 February 1838 he expressed his belief that the spread of education and enlightenment in the country through the Press would conduce to the creation of better relations between India and Britain.

The Press was to him a means to educate and enlighten his countrymen, and it was thus natural that any restriction on its freedom would irritate him very much. His writings in the 'Reformer' bear testimony to the importance he attached to the Press as a means of national regeneration. Its Bengali version, called the *Anubadika*, was brought out in August 1831 with the same end in view. This journal was distributed free of cost for about a year and then its publication was stopped.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Prasannacoomar's editorials in the eighteen-thirties in the 'Reformer' caused many a European eyebrow to be raised in alarm. On 12 October 1834 the 'Reformer' brought out a letter which exhorted Indians to learn the use of firearms. The editorial comment on it only added to the discomposure of the Europeans. Some

European-owned journals thus branded both the letter and the editorial comment as seditious. Writing many years after the incident Dr. Alexander Duff accused the 'Reformer' of assuming "a tone of rancorous and indiscriminating violence towards the British Government, outdoing the wildest flights to which ultra-radicalism" had ever soared in England. There was nothing but sneer in his statement about the 'Reformer' that "a nondescript species of native oligarchy and republicanism combined was the panacea proposed for remedying all the ills of India."

Actually, Prasannacoomar was not at heart an ultra-radical. If he used his journal to point out the defects of the existing institutions, it was done "with a sincere desire for their improvement." In his article entitled 'On the Insecurity of the British Indian Empire' published in the 'Reformer' in 1837, he made a pointed reference to the hauteur of Englishmen towards Indians as well as to the latter's exclusion from posts of responsibility as a source of discontent among the politically-minded people. This was probably written at a time when Dwarkanath Tagore was pressing before the Bird Committee the necessity of appointing Indians as Deputy Magistrates with a view to improving the police system in the country.

The British administration of justice also came in for constructive criticism at his hands in the 'Reformer'. He held that the judicial irregularities complained of by the mofussil people could be considerably rectified if the jury system were introduced in the district courts. To Indians, he pointed out, the jury system, as testified to by the *Mitakshara*, was not unknown. All these writings conduced to making his countrymen conscious of their rights and privileges of which they had been deprived by the British rulers.

His forceful pleading might have induced Bentinck to promulgate Regulation VI in 1832, which provided for the employment of respectable Indians by European District Judges as a *panchayat*, as assessors and as a jury in civil and criminal cases. The mode of selecting the jurors, the number to be employed and the manner in which their verdict should be delivered, were left to the discretion of the Judge who presided. This Regulation, needless to say, did not for a long time transcend its paper value, in spite of the agitation which Indians carried on in 1835-36 for the extension of the jury system in the country.

The establishment of the Landholders' Society on 21 March 1838 owes much to the efforts of Prasannacoomar Tagore. His

assistance proved invaluable in drawing its constitution; and as one of its Secretaries, he was no less a source of inspiration to the agitation carried on against the Government's resumption of rent-free lands. The reply of Mr. Ross Mangles, Secretary to the Board of Revenue, in the 'Bengal Hurkaru' to the criticism levelled by Prasannacoomar in the papers against the resumption proceedings instituted by the Government in 1837-38 appeared very unconvincing in the public eye. The Lakhrajders' meeting at the Town Hall under the presidency of Radhakanta Deb in 1839, of which Prasannacoomar was actually the guiding genius, alarmed Lord Auckland so much that he ordered the whole magistracy and Indian policemen to be present at the Town Hall and to guard the Government House as well. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the Government made a partial concession by issuing a Circular, which exempted rent-free lands measuring less than fifty bighas from assessment.

The National Association, established on 14 September 1851 for safeguarding Indian interests, received his active cooperation. Its merger in the British Indian Association, founded on 31 October 1851, was welcomed by him. He fully subscribed to its primary objects of toning up the British Government in India, ameliorating the condition of Indians and persuading the Governor-General to set up an 18-member Legislative Council, of whom twelve should be Indians. With regard to the third object a memorial was sent to Parliament on the eve of the renewal of the Charter in 1853. It was, however, rejected, and the weakness of the Governor-General's Council, *sans* Indians, was revealed only after the Mutiny of 1857.

Vice-President for some time of the British Indian Association, Prasannacoomar was elected its President after the death of Radhakanta Deb on 19 April 1867. He retained this position until his death. That apart, because of his knowledge of the needs of the country, he was nominated by Government to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1862. Later, he was nominated to the Governor-General's Council.

Merchant, zamindar, lawyer, reformer, journalist, organizer and legislator, Prasannacoomar was a man of varied interests. His translation of *Vivada Chintamani*, his commentary on the rent law and his *Vyavastha Patra* "attest the zeal and ability with which he laboured in the field of authorship". He was also the founder of the Hindu Theatrical Association opened on 28 December 1831. It was his type—the liberal conservative type avoiding all forms of rigidity—that

paved the way for the resurgence of India. He died on 30 August 1868.

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ASUTOSH DEB

Born in 1803, Asutosh Deb (De Sircar) was the eldest son of the Bengali millionaire, Ramdulal De.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Though associated with the *Dharma Sabha* for a long time since 1830, he was liberal enough to support the cause of female education in the country. He set an example by giving his own daughter the best of education at home. Her knowledge of Bengali, Urdu and Braja dialect was admired even by a fastidious journalist like Gaurisankar Tarkabagish. In his editorial in the *Sambad Bhaskar* of 31 May 1849 he referred to the literary attainments of Asutosh Deb's accomplished daughter with a view to prevailing upon the orthodox Hindus to extend their active support to the Hindu Female School established by Bethune on 7 May the same year. His zeal for the spread of female education led him to support openly the efforts of Dr. Alexander Duff in this field of activity.

Though he approved of the missionaries' efforts to spread education, he could not, however, tolerate their policy to gain converts. Thus, to check their growing influence over the minds of young Hindu students, he joined hands with Debendranath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Tarachand Chakrabarti and many others in

establishing the Hindu Charitable Institution in March 1846. He and his younger brother, Pramathanath, donated Rs. 10,000/- to the fund raised for establishing the Institution.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In 1827, Asutosh Deb took part in the agitation against the stamp duty levied on money transactions in Calcutta under Regulation XII of 1826.

He identified himself fully with the interests of the Landholders' Society of 1838. As members of the Society, both he and his younger brother supported the agitation against the Government's policy of resuming Lakhiraj lands.

Of still greater interest is the fact that both Asutosh and Pramathanath took an active part in the agitation of 1834-35 against Adam's Press Regulation of 1823. With their riches and great influence in society, they proved to be a tower of strength to the more articulate and vigorous section of the agitators like Prasanna-coomar Tagore, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Dwarkanath Tagore, Kalinath Roy Choudhury, Rasamay Datta, Rustomjee Cowasjee and Chandrasekhar Deb. It was an occasion for general jubilation when Regulation III of 1823 came to be rescinded by Metcalfe's Act XI of 1835.

Asutosh Deb was one of the first Indians to be included in the Grand Jury of the Supreme Court in July 1833, the others being Dwarkanath Tagore, Rasamay Datta, Birnarasingha Mallick, Radhakrishna Mitra, Kashiprasad Ghosh and Radhamadhab Bandyopadhyaya. Universally respected for his largeheartedness and munificence, Asutosh Deb passed away on 29 January 1856. Iswar Chandra Gupta paid him a glowing tribute in the columns of the *Sambad Prabhakar* of 1 February 1856.

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TARACHAND CHAKRABARTI

An ardent disciple of Rammohun Roy and one of the *avant garde* progressives, Tarachand Chakrabarti occupies an important place in the history of renascent Bengal as a man of action and great organizational ability.

Born in 1804, Tarachand belonged to the first batch of students of the Hindu College. Though a free scholar, he had to abandon his studies on account of poverty and earn his living by working as a translator first to James Silk Buckingham and then to H. H. Wilson. But he was, virtually speaking, a rolling stone, moving on from one job to another, either with the help of Rammohun Roy or his European employers, all barristers, or on his own initiative. A Munsiff in Hooghly, a clerk in the Sadar Diwani Court, the manager of the Burdwan Raj Estate up to 1851, and concurrently a businessman together with Peary Chand Mitra, Tarachand's varied experience of life helped him to understand the needs of his countrymen much better than most of his contemporaries.

AN EXEMPLAR OF SELF-RESPECT

Tarachand's high sense of self-respect never permitted him to kotow to the European Civil Servants or compromise with any evil for a consideration. An exemplar of self-respect, he gave up without a moment's hesitation the Munsiff's position he held in Hooghly when he discovered to his dismay that honesty was by no means at a premium under the British judicial system. He was shocked beyond measure to find himself penalised by the European Judge of Hooghly through the manipulation of a witness whom he had earlier held guilty of perjury in his court. That apart, the subordinate position of the Munsiff, the duties of which were incommensurate with the salary it offered, seemed humiliating to him. But what he resented most in the judicial branch was the "state of feeling entertained by the generality of the Covenanted Civil Service towards their native subordinates". This feeling was generated in the European Civil Servants by their sense of racial superiority, which often led them to deny justice to Indians in their district courts. It was this realization that prompted Tarachand in 1843 to advise Radhanath Sikdar to seek redress for the wrong done to him by the Company's court at Dehra Dun—in callous disregard of his just grievance against

the system of forced labour—by appealing to the Supreme Court in Calcutta.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Known for his scholarship, integrity, forthrightness and refusal to be cowed into submission by European hauteur, Tarachand was welcomed to wear the mantle of leadership by the 'Young Bengal' group, all middle-class youths, English-educated, very critical of the purposes of the Company's administration and eager to promote the material welfare of their countrymen.

What they needed most was an association for mutual understanding as well as for acquiring and diffusing knowledge, with particular reference to the condition of India. This end came to be admirably served by the establishment, on 20 February 1838, of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, with Tarachand Chakrabarti as President, Ramgopal Ghosh and Kalachand Seth as Vice-Presidents and Peary Chand Mitra and Ramtanu Lahiri as Secretaries. They assembled once a month at the Hindu College to listen to papers, written in either English or Bengali, on politics, history, literature, geography and science.

George Thompson, addressing a meeting of the Society at the Hindu College on 11 January 1843, exhorted the members to select topics for discussion with an eye to blending utility with instruction and making "their knowledge subservient to the purposes for which they lived". This gave a definite political bias to the Society, which was conclusively proved by the paper entitled 'The Present State of the East India Company's Criminal Judicature and Police under the Bengal Presidency', read by Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee at the Society's meeting in the Hindu College on 8 February 1843, presided over by Tarachand Chakrabarti. The paper's firmly based criticism of the Company's judicial administration, reflecting as it did the bitter experience of Tarachand, incensed Capt. D. L. Richardson, Principal of the Hindu College, into intervening in the midst of the proceedings with the intention of breaking up the meeting. His angry outburst could be seen in his words that he could not allow the College to be turned into "a den of treason". But Tarachand as President intervened with greater force and spiked Richardson by telling him to his face that permission for using the College hall was duly obtained from the Managing Committee and not through his personal favour. Then, holding out the threat of sending a report

about the unhappy incident to the Managing Committee, he, well seconded by Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee and Kalachand Seth, compelled Richardson to retract his uncalled for remarks.

This virile expression of Young Bengal's spirit of challenge was disliked by many. Contemporary newspapers like 'The Englishman' and 'The Friend of India' frowned upon this indulgence in politics by what came to be derisively called the "Chukerverty faction". 'The Friend of India', in its issue of 15 February 1843, even subtly suggested the deportation of Dakshinaranjan to Batavia for his seditious paper. But by taking serious notice of the activities of the "Chukerverty faction" these Anglophil journals unwittingly paid a compliment to Tarachand's fruitful leadership of the 'Young Bengal' group.

Indian discontent with the many provisions of the Charter Act of 1833 had been deepening for some time. It was very forcefully voiced by Rasik Krishna Mallick at the Town Hall meeting of 5 January 1835. The educated young men wanted more than the position of Sadar Amin or Principal Sadar Amin or Deputy Collector. Dwarkanath Tagore pleaded in 1838 for the appointment of educated Indians as Deputy Magistrates to improve the police system. But before this point came to be conceded by the Government in August 1843, Tarachand, with his band of followers, went ahead to impress upon the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company the desirability of bestowing more offices on Indians. This was done by a resolution adopted at the Town Hall meeting of 18 April 1843. But what proved to be of greater importance in this matter was the establishment of the Bengal British India Society, on 20 April 1843, at a meeting presided over by George Thompson. This Society, looked upon as the precursor of the Indian National Congress, was actually called into being by a resolution introduced by Tarachand and supported by Chandrasekhar Deb, Ramgopal Ghosh and Peary Chand Mitra. Its object was twofold: first, to collect and disseminate information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India, its laws, institutions and resources; and, secondly, to employ peaceable and lawful means "to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes" of Indians.

DEMAND FOR HIGHER POSTS

In practice, however, these just rights and interests of Indians seemed to have been compressed into one single demand for their

more extensive employment in positions of trust and responsibility in every branch of the Company's administration. At a meeting of the Bengal British India Society on 6 July 1843 a resolution was adopted, praying to the Government for the larger employment of Indians in more responsible positions. Though the Government acceded to this prayer by providing for the appointment of educated Indians of respectable families as Deputy Magistrates under Act XV of 5 August 1843, Tarachand, it should be noted, was actually out to make breaches in the walls of exclusiveness built round the Covenanted Civil Service. As early as 15 January 1843 he had regretted in the 'Bengal Spectator' that if the spirit of clanship in the Covenanted Civil Service limited its members' sense of justice towards Indians, its maintenance as a monopoly of Englishmen repressed the expansion of Indian talent and genius and prevented their "industry, merit and character from being duly remunerated". The only remedy of this unhappy situation lay in opening it to public competition. That this powerful pleading of his gave an additional fillip to the growing agitation for the admission of Indians to the Covenanted Civil Service admits of no doubt.

His frequent contributions to the two short-lived journals, 'The Bengal Spectator' and 'The Quill', wherein he undauntedly criticised Government policies and actions, considerably shaped the political aspirations of his countrymen.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

In Tarachand's view, the spread of education was necessary for the social, moral, material and political progress of his countrymen. As a member of the *Gaudiya Samaj* formed in 1823, he cooperated with others to advance this noble cause. But more important was his effort to promote the cause of technical education in the country through the Calcutta Mechanics' Institute founded in 1839. He was a member of its executive committee. Addressing the Institute on its Fourth Anniversary meeting on 7 March 1843, George Thompson hoped that it would be able to meet the country's growing need for surveyors, engineers, machinists, chemists and designers.

A follower of Bentham, Tarachand wanted the Government to promote the greatest good of the greatest number of people by spending more for their education. Writing in the 'Bengal Spectator' of 15 November 1842, he pointed out that the essential function of a good government was to provide education to the people, and

not merely to collect revenue for the maintenance of its police and magistracy. To him, the general enlightenment of the people was the best guarantee of good government, for nothing could better help check crime, preserve the peace and promote commerce.

AVERSION FOR PROSELYTIZATION

XX In spite of his progressive views on education and social reform since the days of his intimate association with Raja Rammohun Roy, he was averse to the proselytization activities of the Christian missionaries. To counteract the influence of the free missionary schools, which tended to become fertile soil for conversion, he collaborated with Radhakanta Deb, Matilal Seal, Asutosh Deb, Ramaprasad Roy and Debendranath Tagore in establishing the Hindu Charitable Institution in 1846.

Tarachand's voluminous commentary on the *Manusambhita*, which was highly praised by Rammohun Roy, is a testimony to the pride he took in the cultural heritage of India. But he also drank deep at the wells of European thought and was thus able to assess correctly the needs of his countrymen lying helpless in a state of subjection. By pinpointing the rationale of good government he not merely stung the conscience of the British but also roused the consciousness of his countrymen about the necessity of making concerted efforts to reach the goal of equality with their rulers. A rational thinker, a virile writer and the leader of the 'Young Bengal' group, Tarachand Chakrabarti died in 1855.

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JAY KRISHNA MOOKERJEE

Son of Jagan Mohan Mookerjee, Jay Krishna Mookerjee was born in 1808. While a Chief Clerk in the Brigade-Major's Office of the 14th Regiment Foot, he saw the storming of the Bharatpur fortress in 1826.

An enlightened zamindar, he spent quite a considerable amount of money for the spread of education in his estates. The Uttarpara Public Library and High School, which subsequently became a college, owe their origin to him. Well known for his progressive views, he was a staunch supporter of Vidyasagar's widow remarriage movement.

A public-spirited man, he was intimately associated with the British Indian Association. In 1878, he vehemently protested, together with Durga Charan Law, Narendra Krishna Deb, K. D. Pal and others, against the Government's policy of free trade which was highly prejudicial to the interests of Indian textile manufacturers. He played a very important part in the deliberations of the second National Conference held in Calcutta from 25 to 27 December 1885. He acted as its President on 26 December. His eagerness to promote the political progress of the country led him to take a keen interest in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress. At its second session in Calcutta in 1886, he took the initiative in getting Dadabhai Naoroji elected as President. Known as "the Nestor of the Bengal zamindars", he died in 1888.

(N.B. For his evidence before the Indigo Commission see the sketch on 'Heroes of the Indigo Disturbances'.)

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RAJA BAHADUR KALI KRISHNA DEB

The grandson of Maharaja Naba Krishna Deb and the second son of Raja Raj Krishna Deb, Kali Krishna Deb was born in Calcutta in 1808.

A reputed Sanskrit scholar, he translated into English the Sanskrit work, *Maha Natak*. He was a corresponding member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, in addition to being a Fellow of the Calcutta University. He was also a Justice of the Peace in Calcutta. The title of Raja Bahadur was conferred on him by Lord William Bentinck in 1833.

In spite of his being one of the leaders of the orthodox group, he always upheld the cause of female education in the country. In this matter he followed in the footsteps of his illustrious cousin, Raja Radhakanta Deb.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As a member of the Landholders' Society of 1838 and subsequently as Vice-President of the British Indian Association of 1851, he contributed considerably, by supporting the zamindars' agitations against the land and administrative policy of the British Government, to the spread of political consciousness among his countrymen.

On 6 April 1857, he presided over the "great non-exemption" meeting at the Town Hall, which was organized by the British Indian Association in support of Sir Barnes Peacock's proposed measure to bring all British-born Europeans under the jurisdiction of the mofussil faujdari courts. The chief speaker at this meeting was George Thompson. Radhakanta Deb, who could not attend the meeting owing to illness, sent a message in which he unreservedly condemned the "Black Act" agitation of the Europeans.

Kali Krishna Deb passed away at Benares on 11 April 1874.

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HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO

"Oh Freedom! there is something dear

E'en in thy very name,

That lights the altar of the soul

With everlasting flame.

Success attend the patriot sword,

That is unsheathed for thee!

....."

The young man who sang the praise of individual freedom from a feeling of revulsion against the practice of slavery in Bengal was a Calcutta Eurasian, commonly known as Henry Derozio.

Born in Calcutta on 10 April 1809, Derozio proved to be a lad of great promise at David Drummond's Dharamtala Academy, where he excelled in recitation, elocution and other general acquirements. His sensitive mind, always reacting to the harsh things around him, eagerly imbibed the rational ideas of his Scottish teacher, Drummond.

From the school to a mercantile firm in 1823 was not a welcome change for him. He soon left it to serve at leisure the Muse of poetry in Bhagalpur, from where he sent his poems for publication to his admirer, Dr. John Grant, editor of the 'India Gazette'. Probably feeling bored, he returned to Calcutta and joined the Hindu College in May 1827 as the fourth teacher. Simultaneously, he worked as an assistant editor of the 'India Gazette'.

EMPHASIS ON FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

An able teacher, Derozio helped his eager pupils to delve deep into the works of political philosophers like Adam Smith, Bentham, Berkeley, Locke, Mill, Hume, Reid, Stewart, Paine and Brown. It was not by encouraging cramming but by inoculating young and avid minds with liberal ideas that Derozio succeeded, within a very short time, in enabling the students of the Hindu College to develop a rational approach to every problem they faced in life and society. To their learning he encouraged them to add depth, understanding and a purpose, without which, he felt, the critical faculty of reasoning or original thinking and the spirit of enquiry, necessary for ascertaining the truth about anything, could not be developed.

In the animated debates and discussions of his Academic

Association, held at first in his own house and later in Srikrishna Singha's Maniktala garden-house, students found ample opportunities to speak on social, religious and political problems as their conscience dictated them, without injuring the truth in which they believed or which they sought. Free will, faith, the sacredness of truth, the meanness of vice, bigotry, the hollowness of idolatry, the nobility of patriotism, the attributes of God, atheism, were some of the subjects fearlessly debated by them in the presence of Derozio. To hear them question traditional authority, criticize age-old customs and beliefs and challenge social and political tyranny was a thrilling experience for sympathetic visitors like David Hare, Justice Sir Edward Ryan of the Supreme Court and Principal Dr. Mill of the Bishop's College.

The talented pupils of Derozio who subsequently became notable personalities in Bengal were Krishnamohan Banerjea, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Ramgopal Ghosh, Madhab Chandra Ghose, Sib Chandra Deb, Harachandra Ghose, Radhanath Sikdar, Govinda Chandra Bysack and Amritlal Mitra. Derozio also delivered lectures every week at the Pataldanga School on literature and moral philosophy. The intellectual exercise of the students and their mental explorations in regions of thought long kept out of their ken inspired Derozio to write:

"Expanding like the petals of young flowers
I watch the gentle opening of your minds

.....
I feel I have not lived in vain".

A PATRIOT AND HIS INFLUENCE

That the 'Young lions', swayed by the ideas of Adam Smith, Locke and Paine, would take immense interest in political discussions was quite natural. They might have alarmed the Europeans, but not Derozio, who at heart was a thorough patriot, proud of the cultural heritage of India, his motherland. This pride of his was movingly expressed in his sonnet, 'To India, My Native Land':

"My country! in thy day of glory past
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,
And worshipped as a deity thou wast.
Where is that glory, where that reverence now?

.....

Well—let me dive into the depths of time,
 And bring from out the ages that have rolled
 A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,
 Which human eye may never more behold;

It is, however, not very difficult to gauge the depth of the patriotism he inspired in young firebrands like Krishnamohan Banerjea, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee and Ramgopal Ghosh. Their withering criticism of the Company's administration not merely shook the British rulers out of their complacency but also conduced to the growth of political consciousness in the country. The spirit of Derozio must have been hugely pleased at the sight of European officers squirming under Radhanath Sikdar's forthright criticism of the system of forced labour. The political ideas of Raja Rammohun Roy would not have advanced like a snowball had not they been preached by the young Derozians at meetings and through journals.

Behind their bold exercise in journalism also could be seen the influence of the same master-spirit. 'The Enquirer' of Krishnamohan Banerjea and 'The Gyananneshun' of Rasik Krishna Mallick and Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee tried to serve the truth and expose the festering wounds with which contemporary Hindu society was afflicted. They probably took their cue from the writings in the 'Parthenon', a moral and literary weekly, which came out under the inspiration of Derozio. This periodical, however, did not survive the second issue because of the opposition of the orthodox Hindus. Its first issue put them in a twitter by advocating female education, European colonization in India and the dispensation of cheap justice in courts of law, in addition to trenchantly criticizing Hindu religious superstitions. This criticism was obviously based on the Derozian principle that what was morally wrong could not be theologically right. Incidentally, the political and social ideas of Rammohun Roy loomed large in all these proposals advocated by the Derozians.

THE STORM

If social traditions and taboos came to be violated by the English-educated students of the Hindu College at this time, it was because these failed to pass the test of reason, the infallible touchstone put in their hands by Derozio.

But what came to be bitterly resented by the discomposed orthodox Hindus was the manner in which College students "cut their way through ham and beef and waded to liberalism through tumblers of beer". Their scorn for Hindu deities, their utter disregard of the feelings of their elders and their growing excesses, combined with the proselytization activities of the Rev. Alexander Duff, threw the moderate Directors of the Hindu College into a paroxysm of rage. Duff's arrangement for the delivery of lectures on Christianity to Hindu College students near the College precincts in 1831 was for the Hindu Directors the last straw on the camel's back. To Hill's first lecture the College authorities firmly reacted by warning their students not to attend meetings outside the College precincts. But, unfortunately, this order came to be scathingly criticized in the 'India Gazette' as being tyrannical and absurd. Everyone thought that Derozio had done it. The College authorities thus felt that the best solution of the crisis lay in the dismissal of Derozio, who, as can be made out from H. H. Wilson's letter to him, was held to be an atheist undermining the morals of the students. He convincingly denied this charge and sent in his resignation which was accepted by the Managing Committee on 25 April 1831. He was made a scapegoat in an unhappy situation, which, in retrospect, appears to have been as much the natural outcome of the immoderation of some students, who temporarily lost their bearings in society under the influence of the heady intellectual wine from the West, as of the tendentious preaching of Christianity by European missionaries. But the storm that felled him could not extinguish the torch of reason he had left in the hands of the 'Young Bengal' group.

Though accused, like Socrates, of corrupting young minds, Derozio was made famous by his disciples who kept aloft the banner of reason and attempted, just as Rammohun Roy had done earlier, to free society from the fetters of bigotry. Consciously or unconsciously, Derozio became a continuer of the mission of Rammohun Roy. In their emphasis on rationalism and human freedom, in their condemnation of idolatry and in the close affinity that existed between the larger purposes of their *Atmiya Sabha* and Academic Association, Rammohun Roy and Derozio seemed to have been impelled by the same dynamic spirit to attempt the regeneration of their country. A poet, teacher and journalist, Derozio died on 23 December 1831 at the incredibly early age of 23.

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KASHIPRASAD GHOSH

"Land of the Gods and lofty name;
Land of the fair and beauty's spell;
Land of the bards of mighty fame,
My native land! for e'er farewell!"

The poet who extolled the greatness of his motherland in these words was Kashiprasad Ghosh, distinguished as much for his acquirements in the English language as for his familiarity with the classical and recondite learning of the West. Son of Sivaprasad Ghosh, a rich zamindar, Kashiprasad was born on 5 August 1809. Within a short time of his admission to the 7th class of the Hindu College on 8 October 1821 he amazed all his teachers and friends by his remarkable proficiency in the English language. Before finishing his education in 1829, he became the cynosure of all eyes not merely for his always being the dux of his class, but also for his excellent verses in English. His English poems, 'Shair' and 'The Boatman's Song to Ganga', established his reputation as a poet. Capt. D. L. Richardson, who was an admirer of Kashiprasad, tells us, in his 'Selections from British Poets' (1834), that 'Shair' received very favourable notice in England. Kashiprasad has some prose works also to his credit. Because of his intellectual attainments and high standing in society, he was made an Honorary Magistrate and a Justice of the Peace in Calcutta.

LOVER OF INDIAN CULTURE

Though not a radical like his classmates, he was still a prominent figure of the 'Young Bengal' group. His love of the English language and its literature did not turn him into a scoffer of the culture and

civilization of his motherland. On the contrary, he loved his motherland too deeply to tolerate any criticism of her culture by any Englishman in whose language he excelled. This attitude of his was clearly reflected in his brilliant review of the first four chapters of Mill's History of British India, which he wrote as an essay, when 22, at the request of Professor Wilson of the Hindu College. Published under the title of 'Criticism of Mill's British India' in the Government Gazette of 14 February 1828, it was a bold and patriotic attempt on the part of young Kashiprasad to defend the Indian system of chronology (the four Yugas), the merits of the Hindu caste-system, the limited nature of Hindu monarchy and the system of justice prevalent in ancient India. The wealth of facts he brought to bear on the points at issue was matched by his superb style of writing. He typified the revolution in the intellectual qualities of Indians educated at the Hindu College.

Though he did not take an active part in politics, he was nevertheless a prominent member of the Landholders' Society formed in 1838.

A great admirer of David Hare, Kashiprasad took a keen interest in advancing the cause of English education in the country. He wholeheartedly supported the Hindu Benevolent Institution established in 1831. He was a member of its Managing Committee for some time.

A frequent contributor both in verse and prose to many English journals in Calcutta, the founder-editor of the 'Hindu Intelligencer' from 1846 to 1857, Kashiprasad, noted for his moderate views, died on 11 November 1873.

Bibliography: *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha* (Vol. I, 1356 B.S.); The Government Gazette, 14 February 1828; Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Muktir Sandhane Bharat* (1367 B.S.); C. E. Buckland, Dictionary of Indian Biography (1906); *Bisvakosh* (compiled by Nagendranath Basu, Vol. IV, 1300 B.S.).

CHANDRASEKHAR DEB

Born in 1810, Chandrasekhar Deb was one of the earliest disciples of Rammohun Roy. After receiving his education at the Hindu College, the nursery of liberalism in Bengal, he threw himself

heart and soul into the social reform movement initiated by Rammohun Roy. Like most of the early liberals, he also found a position in the uncovenanted civil service of the Company as a Deputy Collector. He is, however, remembered not for his services to the Company, nor for his commentary on the Revenue Laws, but for his contributions to the awakening of social and political consciousness in Bengal.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

His mind, free from all religious and social inhibitions, eagerly imbibed the liberal and progressive ideas propagated by Rammohun Roy. He believed in the unity of the Godhead, and it was on his suggestion that Rammohun Roy established the *Brahmo Samaj* at a separate place for the unsectarian worship of the 'One True God', on 20 August 1828, and chose Tarachand Chakrabarti as Secretary.

As a result of Rammohun Roy's influence he ceased to be idolatrous. He must have also associated himself with all the agitations launched by Rammohun to alleviate the miseries of Hindu women in society.

Believing in the prevailing ideas that education alone could elevate the character of his countrymen and tone up the moral fibre of society, he generously extended his aid to institutions, including the Hindu Benevolent Institution, whenever they needed it.

Despite all his liberalism, he could not tolerate the influence exercised over young minds by the Christian missionaries in their schools. Thus he wholeheartedly supported the move of Debendranath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Tarachand Chakrabarti and other leading members of society to counteract the influence of the missionaries by establishing the Hindu Charitable Institution in 1846.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The liberal in Chandrasekhar Deb could not stand the restrictions imposed upon the Press by Regulation III of 1823. Together with Prasannacoomar Tagore, Rustomjee Cowasjee, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Dwarkanath Tagore, Kalinath Roy Choudhury, Asutosh Deb, Pramathanath Deb, Radhakrishna Mitra, Shyama Charan Bose, Rasamay Datta, D. C. Paul, Mahesh Chandra Datta, Madhusudan Mitra, Harimohan Bose, Nabakrishna Banerjee, Uday Chand Datta, Iswar Chandra Mukherjee, Harish Chandra Sen, Srinath Mukherjee,

Shyama Charan Sen, Rajkrishna Sen, Ramchand Banerjee and many others, including Europeans, he joined the agitation, launched by a public meeting at the Town Hall on 5 January 1835, to induce the Government to abolish the restrictions on the Press. They achieved their purpose when Charles Metcalfe rescinded Regulation III of 1823 by Act XI of 1835. This resounding success, jubilantly celebrated by the agitators in Calcutta, stirred the political consciousness of Indians.

The establishment of the Bengal British India Society, representing the aristocracy of intelligence, on 20 April 1843 owes much to the patriotic endeavours of Chandrasekhar Deb. At its inaugural meeting, presided over by George Thompson, Chandrasekhar seconded Tarachand Chakrabarti's resolution, which proposed the formation of the Society with a view to collecting and disseminating information relating to the actual condition of the people in British India, in addition to the employment of the means of a peaceable and lawful character to secure the welfare and advance the just rights and interests of all classes. The Executive Committee of this Society, which was later merged in the British Indian Association in 1851, included, among others, Chandrasekhar Deb, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Ramgopal Ghosh and Peary Chand Mitra. George Thompson also delivered lectures at the house of Chandrasekhar Deb to arouse the political consciousness of Indians.

A stalwart of the *Brahmo Samaj*, a liberal who worked consciously for the progress of his countrymen, Chandrasekhar Deb, a martyr to asthma, died round about 1879.

Bibliography: Manmatha Nath Ghosh, *Friends and Followers of Rammohun* (The Father of Modern India, Commemoration Volume, 1935, Part II); Sivanath Sastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (1957); *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha* (Vol. II, 1356 B.S.); 'Meeting at the House of Baboo Chunder Saikhur Deb on 30 January 1843', 'Formation of the Bengal British India Society, 20 April 1843' (Speeches by Mr. George Thompson, ed. by Raj Jogeshur Mitter, Cal., 1895); The Calcutta Gazette, 3 January 1835.

RASIK KRISHNA MALICK

Son of Nabakisore Mallick, Rasik Krishna Mallick was born about 1810 at Sinduriapatti in Calcutta. While a student at the Hindu College, from where he passed out in 1830, he came under the influence of Derozio. He regularly attended the discussions and debates held at the Academic Association, the guiding genius of which was Derozio himself. Though lacking in fire, his speeches were marked by sobriety and cold logic. A stalwart of Young Bengal, he taught for some time in Mr. Hare's School at Pataldanga and edited Dakshinaranjan's *Gyananneshun* before joining the Subordinate Executive Service as Deputy Collector in 1837.

ADVOCATE OF SOCIAL REGENERATION

A rationalist, inspired by the ideas of Derozio and Young Bengal, Rasik Krishna condemned Hindu superstitious customs and prejudices while associated with the 'Parthenon' and the *Gyananneshun*. Child marriage, polygamy and swearing in the court of law by "tulsi, copper and Ganges water" were repugnant to his mind. As a juror (1834) and Honorary Magistrate (1835), he made it known to the court that he would not abide by the prescribed Hindu forms of swearing. His opposition to Hindu orthodoxy cost him not only his position as teacher in Mr. Hare's School but also the shelter of his father's house. He fully believed, as expressed in his Town Hall speech of 5 April 1834, that without Rammohun Roy's pleading the British Government would not have agreed to do anything for promoting the cause of Hindu social welfare. As a member of Kissory Chand Mitra's *Subrid Samiti* (1854), he actively worked for social reform.

MENTAL AWAKENING

As a member of Young Bengal and as the editor of the *Gyananneshun*, Rasik Krishna did much to further the cause of mental awakening in Bengal. The spread of English education, he felt, was necessary to dispel ignorance from society. His zeal for English education led him to establish, as reported by the *Sumachar Durpan* of 18 June 1831, a free Hindu School at Simulia with only eighty students. In his famous Town Hall speech of 5 January 1835, he condemned the Government's policy of spending Indian revenue on the appointment of *padres* for the propagation of the Gospel

among "military and non-military Christians", instead of using this revenue for the spread of education among the people.

Together with Rasamay Datta, he helped the spread of enlightenment through the Calcutta Public Library opened in 1836.

He was also one of the sponsors of the move to persuade the Government to introduce the use of Bengali in the place of Persian in all court proceedings. This was ultimately done by Act XXIX of 1837 and Act XII of 1843.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The continuation of restrictions on the freedom of the Press as well as on holding public meetings, together with the neglect of Indian interests in the Charter Act of 1833, caused widespread resentment among the educated and politically-conscious people of Bengal. Rasik Krishna was a signatory to the letter sent to the sheriff on 4 December 1834, seeking permission to hold a public meeting at the Town Hall to discuss the issues in question. The meeting was held on 5 January 1835. At this meeting Rasik Krishna emerged as the most outspoken critic of the Government's policy as embodied in the Charter Act of 1833. He pointed out, in the first instance, that the necessity of studying at Haileybury kept the door of the Covenanted Civil Service closed to Indians. Besides, training for intending candidates at Haileybury was unnecessary, since India constituted, by and large, the best training college for them. The subjects they read at Haileybury did not help them to acquire any knowledge about the wants and grievances of Indians. Secondly, he pointed out that the abolition of the Company's monopoly trade in tea had not done Indians any good. The actual beneficiaries of this provision in the Act were Englishmen. Had the Act abolished the Company's monopoly trade in salt and opium, Indians would have had some reason to be grateful. Thirdly, he condemned that provision of the Act of 1833 which subordinated the Supreme Court to the Governor-General. It was very unreasonable to offer the Governor-General a position which was more powerful than that of the most despotic king of England in the past.

ADVOCATE OF A FREE PRESS

At the public meeting of 5 January 1835 the restrictions imposed on the Press under Regulation III of 1823 came to be condemned by many speakers. This agitation was given further impetus by the

proceedings of another public meeting held at the Town Hall on 8 June 1835. Rasik Krishna tore to shreds the contention of Mr. Osborne that the native Press should be kept in shackles. Osborne's criticism of native papers was meaningless, since he could not even read their names. Rasik Krishna condemned the policy of having two different sets of laws for the European and the native Press. The latter should be restrained, if necessary, by the same laws that applied to the English. He concluded by drawing the attention of his opponents to a passage from Milton: "Who kills man, kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God in the very eye!"

Rasik Krishna and his friends of the Young Bengal group were grateful to Sir Charles Metcalfe for restoring the freedom of the Press under Act XI of 1835. A responsible Press, they believed, would never abuse its freedom.

A CRITIC OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Rasik always felt that "if the government be inefficient and the administration of justice be corrupt, individual subjects would certainly deteriorate in moral virtues". He regretted that, because of corruption in the Calcutta Police, men of wealth and influence, with an unjust cause, were advantageously placed in any law-suit against the poor, with a just cause. He thus held that justice could be maintained if the Government identified itself with the welfare and interests of the governed. But this principle received no attention in India. The Company's Government was guided by a mercantile spirit—by the principle of gain and of self-interest—which prevented the framing of laws and the administration of justice in such a way as to protect the rights and interests of Indians. For the removal of these evils, he advocated not only the abolition of the Company's political power, but also the appointment of educated Indians, not "the half-educated Amlas", to posts of trust and responsibility in the judiciary. As a matter of fact, he advocated the larger admission of Indians into all branches of the Company's administration.

CHAMPION OF THE RYOTS' CAUSE

Rasik Krishna championed the cause of the ryots as well. He pointed out that glaring judicial flaws had made the Permanent Settlement inimical to the rights of the ryots. By limiting its own

demand to a certain fixed ratio the Government had rendered the zamindars secure against any further encroachment upon their profits, while it left the poor ryot "in a precarious position with regard to his rights", which were "wholly dependent upon the arbitrary will of his superior".

The incorruptible Rasik Krishna, who was "the guide, philosopher and friend" of Ramtanu Lahiri, passed away in Calcutta on 8 January 1858.

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SIBCHANDRA DEB

Son of Brajakisore Deb, Sibchandra Deb was born on 20 July 1811 at Konnagar in the district of Hooghly. In 1825, he was admitted into the Hindu College, where, in course of time, he became a disciple of Derozio. He started his career as a computer in the Survey Department before joining the Subordinate Executive Service as Deputy Collector in 1838. He was a very efficient officer.

An admirer of Rammohun Roy, he developed with time a faith in the unity of the Godhead. His leanings towards Brahmoism ultimately led him to join the *Brahmo Samaj* in 1843. He was formally initiated into Brahmoism in 1850. His sober and rational views on the organization of the *Samaj* were respected by all elderly Brahmos. In 1878, he became the leader of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*.

PROMOTER OF MENTAL AWAKENING

Like all progressives, he also endeavoured to spread education for regenerating society. The Konnagar schools, both English and vernacular, came into existence as a result of his exertions.

He realized the importance of female education to social progress very early in life. He gave the best of education to his daughters, and

admitted one of them to the Bethune School, brushing aside the opposition of the orthodox section. In 1860, he opened a girls' school in his own house. He also bore all expenses incurred over the construction of a new building for this school. For the girls he wrote a book entitled 'Sisupalan'.

The demure benefactor of the inhabitants of Konnagar, Sibchandra Deb passed away on 12 November 1890.

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ISWAR CHANDRA GUPTA

A poet and satirist, Iswar Chandra Gupta was born in March 1812. The premature death of his mother and the poverty of his father, Harinarayan Gupta, did not allow him to receive a good education. He was brought up in his maternal uncle's house.

His exercise in the field of vernacular journalism proved to be very fruitful. His *Sambad Prabhakar*, launched as a weekly with the help of Jogendramohan Tagore on 28 January 1831, had a very chequered career before it became a daily on 14 June 1839. The shortlived *Sambad Ratnavali*, *Pasanda-Peeran* and *Sambad Sadhuranjan*, all edited by him, form an eloquent commentary on his journalistic capacity.

LOVER OF BENGALI CULTURE

His spirit of enquiry and deep love of Bengali culture led him to collect and publish in *Sambad Prabhakar* the poems of Ramprasad Sen, Ramnidhi Gupta, Rammohun Basu, Nityanandadas Bairagi, Haru Thakur, Rasu, Nrisingha and Lakshmikanta Biswas.

His biting satires, in which he excelled, spared none, not even the Governor-General, or the Lieutenant-Governor, or any Member of the Council. If he delighted in pulling the legs of men like Gaurisankar Bhattacharya, he found greater delight in wringing the ears of the Anglicized Babus, who dreamt of going to Heaven with boots on and smoking cheroots. Fashionable Babus, gadding about in

borrowed plumes and not ashamed of begging food from others, were always the butt of his jokes. Brahmins or Hindu converts of spurious piety or spurious politicians came in for much criticism at his hands. He simply could not tolerate spuriousness in any person or institution. Human greed and hypocrisy were always the objects of his detestation.

His poem, *Swadesh*, is an eloquent testimony to his feeling of nationality. In this poem he expressed his preference for Indian dogs rather than for foreign gods, and exhorted his countrymen to dedicate themselves to the task of improving the Bengali language and of spreading education.

He was a keen supporter of the *Banga-Ranjinee Sabha* of June 1838, which encouraged people to write and speak Bengali correctly. His zeal for promoting the vernacular language is clearly reflected in his poem, *Matribhasa*.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

He was no less keen to spread education among the people. Thus, in July 1839, he assisted Prankishen Mitra, Shyamacharan Banerjee, Nabin Chandra Mitra, Kailash Chandra Ghosal and Gaurmohan Basu to establish an English school at Baraset.

Together with such national-minded stalwarts as Debendranath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Akshay Kumar Datta, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Tarachand Chakrabarti and a host of others, he fully associated himself with the Hindu Charitable Institution which was established in March 1846 to counteract the influence of the Christian missionaries over the minds of the Hindu youths. Essentially a moderate, his aversion for the proselytization activities of the missionaries did not, however, blind him to the usefulness of spreading the knowledge of Western science among his countrymen.

Though he supported Bethune's Female School of 1849, he cautioned guardians about the need of preventing their wards from becoming Anglicized. There is a pointed reference to this in his poem, *Durbiksha*.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The effect on society of the serialized publication of Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* in the early numbers of the *Sambad Prabhakar* is not known with any precision. But there is no gainsaying the fact that

Iswar Chandra Gupta stirred the political conscience of his countrymen by the way he sarcastically attacked the oppression practised by the European indigo planters on the poor and helpless ryots of Bengal in his famous poem, *Nilkar*. In the same poem he ridiculed the physical weakness of the Bengalees.

Iswar Chandra Gupta was an active member of the *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha*, the first political organization established in 1836 by Kalinath Roy Choudhury, Dwarknath Tagore, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Gaurisankar Tarkabagish and Ramlochan Ghosh. He took part in the deliberations of the meeting that was held in January 1837 to adopt measures for sending a Memorial to the Government against Regulation III of 1828 designed to resume all Lakhiraj lands. Both Hindus and Muslims of all classes were invited to support the agitation started by the Sabha.

This Sabha soon disintegrated owing to the strife between the *Brahma Sabha* and the *Dharma Sabha* and was merged in the Landholders' Society of 1838. It redounds to the credit of this Society, as pointed out by Iswar Chandra Gupta, to have succeeded in persuading the Government by its agitation to exempt 10 bighas of rent-free land if it were donated to a Brahmin by any landlord.

Iswar Chandra was also one of the organizers of the National Association, which was founded in September 1851, with Debendranath Tagore as Secretary, to ventilate Indian grievances on the eve of the renewal of the Charter. This organization was, however, superseded by the British Indian Association founded on 29 October the same year.

Iswar Chandra regretted the lack of unity among Bengalees. This was the reason why such political organizations as the *Bangabhasa Prakasika Sabha*, the Landholders' Society, the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge and the Bengal British India Society turned out to be painfully shortlived.

To Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya, Nabin Chandra Sen and Rabindranath Tagore were all poets of the cultured Bengalees; but Iswar Chandra Gupta was the poet of unsophisticated Bengal. He was a thorough Bengali, using a diction that expressed the true soul and genius of Bengal. Not beautiful imagery but harsh realism saturated his poetry and satires and made him the symbol of the New Bengal striving to get on to its feet after a long period of prostration. He died at the age of 47 on 23 January 1859.

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HARIMOHAN SEN

Harimohan Sen, the eldest son of Dewan Ram Kamal Sen, was born on 7 August 1812. He read at the Hindu College, and among his classmates were such great celebrities of Young Bengal as Rasik Krishna Mallick, Krishna Mohan Bandyopadhyaya and Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyaya. His scholarship in English, Bengali and Persian was acknowledged by both Indians and Europeans. He worked for some time as translator of the Puranas under Dr. H. H. Wilson.

Like his illustrious father, Harimohan also worked in the Mint as well as in the Government Treasury as a temporary Dewan prior to his joining the Bank of Bengal as Dewan in 1844. He, however, resigned his position in the Bank in 1849 and took to business wherein he met with only partial success. After the Sepoy Mutiny he took up service under the Maharaja of Jaipur and became his chief adviser in 1868. His reputation as an honest and able administrator spread far and wide.

His varied interests led him to establish intimate connections with many learned and research institutions, including the Agricultural Society and the Asiatic Society.

A MODEL OF SELF-RESPECT

Like many self-respecting men of his time, Harimohan also set an inspiring example of self-respect. Truckling to Europeans for a consideration, at the cost of self-prestige, was against his grain. In 1849, he threw up his dewanship, worth Rs. 1,500 a month, in the Bank of Bengal, when he was unjustly suspected by Charles Hogg, the Bank's Secretary, of having written some derogatory articles on the latter's conduct towards the native clerks in the 'Hindu Intelligencer'. Subsequently, the groundless proceedings instituted by Hogg against Harimohan fell to the ground.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Harimohan's character, like his father's, was an amalgam of flexible orthodoxy and liberalism. He welcomed progress but at the same time opposed any influence or move which tended to undermine the cohesion of Indian society. The influence of the Christian missionaries over the minds of Bengali youths was disliked by him. To counteract this influence he helped Debendranath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Tarachand Chakrabarti and others to establish in March 1846 the Hindu Charitable Institution of which he became the Joint-Secretary.

Interested in the cause of vocational education for Indian youths, he extended his wholehearted support to the Calcutta Mechanics' Institute established in 1839. He also became an active member of the Society for the Promotion of Industrial Arts, under the auspices of which the Calcutta School of Arts was later opened, with Col. H. Goodwyn as its President.

To help the diffusion of the knowledge of science and literature he became an active member of both the Calcutta Lyceum and the Bethune Society. Of the latter, particularly, he was elected Vice-President in 1856.

POLITICAL AWARENESS

As an enthusiastic member of the Landholders' Society, he was a source of inspiration and help to the conscious zamindars agitating for their rights over the Lakhiraj issue. To help awaken political consciousness among his countrymen he joined the Bengal British India Society formed in April 1843 under the inspiring guidance of George Thompson. Later, in 1851, he became an important member of the British Indian Association and warmly supported its agitation, through constitutional means, for securing Indian rights and interests.

A CRITIC OF THE GOVERNMENT

Though he appeared too conservative in the eyes of some of his progressive compatriots for the role he played in the agitation against the Lex Loci (Act XXI) of 1850, which offered protection to the right of inheritance of Indian converts, he succeeded, in cooperation with Radhakanta Deb and others, in bringing the British Government into disfavour with the Hindu masses. As Secretary to the Committee set up to carry on the agitation, he was considerably responsible for the tone and language of the Memorial sent to England. The monster

meeting held in Calcutta to protest against the Act was a true measure of the people's indignation at the British Government's unauthorized interference with their feelings and sentiments.

A man of sterling qualities of head and heart, Harimohan Sen's life and activities became a source of inspiration not only to his countrymen but also to his children and relatives many of whom attained celebrity in renaissance Bengal.

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TARANATH TARKABACHASPATI

Taranath Tarkabachaspati was born in November 1812 in a well-to-do family of Sanskrit pandits in Kalna. His father, Kalidas Sarababhaum, was well known for his scholarship in Sanskrit.

Taranath joined the Sanskrit College in 1830. Though he passed the Smriti Examination held by the Law Committee in 1836 and was appointed Sadar Amin at Burdwan, he declined the offer and chose to open a *Chatuspathi* in his village at his own cost. But in 1844 he was persuaded by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar to come out of his cloistered life in Kalna and join the Sanskrit College as Vyakarana (Grammar) Pandit, a position which was first offered to Vidyasagar who, however, believed that Taranath's knowledge of Sanskrit Grammar was sounder and deeper than his. He also worked for some time as Assistant Secretary of the Sanskrit College from 1846. What stands to his credit even today is his famous Sanskrit dictionary which he took 12 years to complete. He was held in high esteem by E. B. Cowell, Principal of the Sanskrit College, for his profound scholarship, diligence and honesty.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Like Vidyasagar, Taranath found enough inspiring material for social reform in his knowledge of Sanskrit. He felt that as long as women were kept in ignorance they would continue to be subjected to all kinds of oppression in society. He thus welcomed the establish-

ment of the Hindu Female School by Bethune in 1849 and admitted his own daughter there without any hesitation.

He also helped Vidyasagar to carry on the campaign for widow remarriage and was one of the signatories to the petition sent to the Government. Though harassed in society for his unqualified support of the cause of widow remarriage, he ignored it all and actively helped Vidyasagar to bring about the first widow remarriage between Srish Chandra Vidyaratna and Kalimati Devi on 7 December 1856.

Taranath was also a great opponent of the custom of child marriage in Hindu society.

An ardent supporter of the *Hindu Mela*, he passed away in June 1885.

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KRISHNA MOHAN BANERJEA

One of the most towering personalities of Young Bengal, Krishna Mohan Banerjea was born in Calcutta on 24 May 1813. His father, Jiban Krishna Banerjea, was an orthodox Brahmin, poor but proud of the *kulinism* of his family.

Krishna Mohan's schooling began in 1819. His brilliant progress from Hare's Arpuli Pathsala to Hare's Pataldanga School and thence to the Hindu College in 1824 was made possible by the pecuniary aid of the Calcutta School Society as well as by the unfailing guidance of David Hare himself. The Society's aid, together with a scholarship of Rs. 16 which he obtained in 1828, helped him to complete his studies at the College. At the annual College examination, held on 18 February 1829, he emerged as the best English scholar. And his scholarly attainments became so widely known that he was offered in 1829, while still a senior student, a teachership at the Delhi College, which he had to relinquish despite his earlier acceptance of it.

While in College, Krishna Mohan came under the influence of Derozio, though he was never under the latter's tuition. Like many others, he used to visit the Lower Circular Road house of the young

Eurasian teacher and imbibe ideas which, apart from turning him into a critic of the tyranny of Hindu customs and prejudices, set aflame his zeal for reform. Reason was the forte of his intelligent mind, ever thirsting for knowledge and ever seeking the truth about everything around him.

After leaving the Hindu College on 1 November 1829, he became a teacher in the Pataldanga School, where he taught for two years to the immense satisfaction of David Hare. But Hare had to discharge him from this school under pressure of the orthodox Hindus who had been provoked into a vindictive attitude by the reckless behaviour of some of his friends. These, in their youthful ebullience for demonstrating how free their minds had become of all prejudices, ate beef at his house during his absence on 23 August 1831 and tossed the bones into the adjoining house of two bigoted Brahmin brothers, Bhairabchandra and Sambhuchandra Chakrabarti. This sparked off a dangerous situation. The indiscreet young men escaped, but innocent Krishna Mohan had to pay dearly for their misdeed. He was turned out from the family shelter by his brother, Bhuban Mohan, who was frightened out of his wits by threats of physical injury and social ostracism held out by the enraged Hindus of the locality.

Krishna Mohan obtained shelter in Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee's house, but even from here he was expelled after a month by Dakshinaranjan's father. Despised as an outcast, he had no other alternative than to take lodgings in a European's house, where he came into contact with the Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff. He then seriously applied himself to the study of the Christian Scriptures, and ultimately embraced Christianity on 17 October 1832.

Independent-minded, he chose in 1833 to join, to the great chagrin of Dr. Duff, the Anglican Church rather than the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He worked in the Church Missionary Society's School at Amherst Street as Superintendent from 1833 to 1840, when he was succeeded by the Rev. James Long. He was ordained as Deacon in 1836, and on 27 September 1839 he was appointed Minister of Christ Church, the first Episcopal Church to be placed under the charge of an Indian clergyman. His association with the Bishop's College was also very intimate. He studied theology and learnt Latin, Greek and Hebrew there. On 20 February 1852, he joined the teaching staff of the College as the third professor, and in the following year he became the second professor. He taught with

growing reputation for seventeen years until 20 December 1867, when he retired on a pension of £ 100 a year.

A member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from November 1860 to April 1885, a Fellow of the University of Calcutta from 5 June 1860 and President of its Faculty of Arts for the years 1867 and 1868, twice elected as Municipal Commissioner in Calcutta, Krishna Mohan Banerjea's contributions to the renascence of Bengal are inestimable.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Krishna Mohan's active participation in the debates and discussions of Derozio's Academic Association, founded in 1828, showed his eagerness to come out of the mental straitjacket in which his forbears had lived for centuries without ever striving to know how the world around them was progressing. Guided by Derozio and influenced by the rationalism of the West, Krishna Mohan became a stout upholder of the freedom of thought which lay crushed in Hindu society under the deadweight of prejudices and superstitions. His contributions to the shortlived 'Parthenon' bore the clear impress of a bold mind, free from the shackles of prejudice and eager to help Indians see the unreason behind many of their social and religious practices. His paper on 'Reform, Civil and Social, among the Educated Hindus', read before the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge on 8 May 1840, set his enlightened listeners pondering over the necessity of reforming society.

Through the Bethune Society, of which he was elected Vice-President on 28 November 1867, he succeeded in arousing the interest of his educated countrymen in the literature and philosophy of ancient India. In this respect, his learned disquisitions on 'Sanskrit Poetry' and 'The Relation between the Hindu and Buddhistic Systems of Philosophy' are noteworthy.

Than he none realized better the necessity of imparting proper education to young men in Bengal. As a teacher of Hare's Pataldanga School and also as the Superintendent of the C. M. S. School, he worked with devotion to make the minds of the youths useful to the cause of their country's regeneration. Education for youths was his first love, and he voluntarily cooperated with anyone who chose to become the instrument of spreading education. Thus with Dwarkanath Tagore and others, he was present at the inaugural ceremony of Seal's

attending the levees at the Government House. And it was under his pressure also that Bishop Milman and his sister had to arrange parties at their residence where guests of both races met on terms of equality. He sponsored the establishment of the Family Literary Club in May 1857 with a view to uniting Indians and Europeans in close intellectual sympathy. That, he felt, would be a practical step towards eliminating inequality between them. He was elected Chairman of this Club in April 1865. The discussion of such subjects as 'The Advantages of Moral Education', 'Female Education', 'Government', etc., helped improve European understanding of Indian problems.

It was obvious, therefore, that Krishna Mohan, who hated inequality in any form, would condemn the agitation of the orthodox Hindus against the Lex Loci (Act XXI) of 1850, which recognised the rights of Indian converts to their paternal or ancestral property. The brilliant defence he offered in his pamphlet of these legal rights of Indian Christians persuaded the Privy Council to reject the Hindu petition, supported by the Earl of Ellenborough, against the Lex Loci.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Though Krishna Mohan was drawn into the vortex of public affairs very late in life, he never failed to identify himself with the highest political aspirations of his countrymen. In April 1832, he, together with David Hare, Rasamay Datta, Debendranath Tagore, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Srikrishna Singha and Radhaprasad Roy, took part in the movement the aim of which was to persuade Parliament to pass a legislative enactment "to enable parties, in civil actions at law, to have their cases tried by jury, at the option of either plaintiff or defendant". Later, in the early forties, when the Bengal British India Society was agitating for the admission of Indians to the Civil Service, he boldly advocated the policy of filling up the highest judicial and fiscal offices in the Company's administration through open competitive examinations.

His adoption of the religion of the British rulers could not prevent him from joining his Hindu friends in opposing the British Government's political measures considered detrimental to Indian interests. As one of the leading members of the shortlived Indian League formed in 1875, he tried to promote the political interests of his countrymen. But it was in his active participation in the affairs of the Indian Association, established on 26 July 1876 by Surendranath Banerjea, Ananda Mohan Basu, Dwarkanath Gangopadhyaya

and Kristo Das Pal, that one can get a glimpse of the true nature of his patriotism. In 1878 he was elected President of the Association, and in April the same year he proved his mettle as a staunch patriot by playing an inspiring role in the agitation against Lytton's Vernacular Press Act, which came to be condemned by Mr. Gladstone even in his speeches in the Midlothian campaign. The Indian Association called a public meeting at the Town Hall on 17 April 1878 to protest against this gagging measure. Lord Lytton ordered the police to keep a close watch on the proceedings of the meeting. Rich and influential Indians were browbeaten by the Government into avoiding it. Even the Sheriff refused to give his permission for holding the meeting. All this did not daunt Krishna Mohan. He came forward to preside over what proved to be, in the words of Surendranath Banerjea, "one of the most successful meetings ever held in Calcutta". Krishna Mohan tore the Act to ribbons by his analytical criticism and showed that there was nothing to justify its promulgation. This meeting sounded the death-knell of the Vernacular Press Act and disclosed the growing power of the middle class. Surendranath Banerjea rightly observes that it "marked a definite and progressive stage in national evolution".

The meeting over, the Association addressed a letter to Gladstone, expressing their gratitude to him for his support of the liberty of the Press in India. The letter was drafted by Surendranath and revised by Krishna Mohan. When the Act was repealed by Lord Ripon, another meeting, presided over by Krishna Mohan, was held at the Town Hall in February 1882 to express the Association's gratitude as well as to consider the question of local self-government.

The Indian Association called another public meeting on 17 July 1883 "to consider the means for raising a National Fund for purposes of constitutional agitation, both here and in England". Presiding over it, Krishna Mohan said, "Constitutional agitation, as I take it, is another word for lawful efforts for lawfully fulfilling our duties—for doing what either God or man may rightfully expect at our hands". However, since the fund raised was meant for political purposes, the Bank of Bengal refused to keep it in its custody. This refusal roused the anger of Krishna Mohan, who personally took the money to the Bank's Secretary. The Secretary felt embarrassed at the sight of Krishna Mohan and asked him how he could become interested in such a political matter. Instantly came Krishna Mohan's retort: "It is a political cause of my country, and would I not join it?"

To Krishna Mohan patriotism was no abstraction but concrete sympathy for his fallen countrymen. His sense of belonging to the Indian nation was not affected in any way by his Christianity. He was, as Surendranath Banerjea admits, the guiding spirit of the younger generation of politicians. He was an unfailing source of inspiration to them all. When Lal Mohan Ghosh returned from England after successfully executing his mission there on behalf of the Association, he was accorded a rousing public reception at the Town Hall on 4 March 1880, presided over by Krishna Mohan. Lal Mohan was described by him as the first Indian ever sent to England with authority to speak on behalf of his people.

A man of letters, honoured by the University of Calcutta with the degree of Doctor of Law *honoris causa* on 11 March 1876, a linguist well versed in eleven languages, both Indian and European, old and modern, the leader of the band of reformers and a brave patriot who took the leading part "in what was the first great political demonstration of the middle class community in Bengal", Krishna Mohan Banerjea was the type of character that was fast becoming rare, as Surendranath Banerjea regretted, in their midst. He passed away at the height of his fame on 11 May 1885.

Palmas qui meruit ferat (let him, who deserves, bear the palm); no matter to what community in India he may belong.

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RADHANATH SIKDAR

Son of Tituram Sikdar, Radhanath was born in Calcutta in October 1813. After receiving his preliminary education at Kamal Basu's School, he entered the Hindu College in 1824 where he met Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, the guiding star of Young Bengal. The noble traits of the teacher largely shaped the character of young Radhanath. A brilliant student, Radhanath's amazing proficiency in higher Mathematics was a matter of pride to his teacher, Dr. Tytler.

In 1832, he joined the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India as a computer. He worked under Col. George Everest, who did not allow him later to enter the Subordinate Executive Service. His competence as computer came to be universally appreciated. In 1852, he discovered the highest peak of the world in the Himalayas. It was named Mount Everest by Sir Andrew Waugh, the Surveyor-General. The same year, Radhanath, in addition to holding the post of Chief Computer, became the Superintendent of the Government Observatory in Calcutta. He retired in March 1862 after 30 years' service. His 'Auxiliary Tables' (1851) and contributions to 'The Manual of Surveying' (2nd edition, 1855) were of tremendous help to survey work. He was made a corresponding member of the Society of Natural History in Bavaria.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

Like all Derozians, Radhanath felt that education alone could dispel the ignorance of his countrymen. He taught for some time in a free school opened by Peary Chand Mitra for illiterate children. In his later life, he worked as a teacher of Mathematics in the General Assembly's Institution. In spite of his drilling in the English system of education, he believed in the utility of imparting education to the poor in the vernacular.

Vitally interested in technical education, Radhanath became one of the managers of the Society for the Promotion of Arts and Crafts. Subsequently, this Society helped the establishment of the Calcutta Art School in 1854.

FEMALE EDUCATION AND VERNACULAR

Radhanath firmly believed that in female education lay the ultimate solution of the problem of emancipation of women. To him,

the vernacular was the fittest medium of instruction for women. He and Peary Chand Mitra together brought out the *Masic Patrika* (1854) for the enlightenment of Hindu women. Its articles, rich and varied in matter, were written in simple vernacular. In the columns of this shortlived journal Peary Chand's *Alaler Gharer Dulal* was published. Well versed in the Greek and Latin classics, Radhanath collected matter from Plutarch, Xenophon and others to write interesting articles for the *Patrika*. He also participated in the discussions on female education held at the Bethune Society (1851) and the *Subrid Samiti* (1854).

SOCIAL REFORMER

A hater of Hindu prejudices and superstitious customs, Radhanath, together with Peary Chand Mitra and Kissory Chand Mitra, carried on a ceaseless campaign against child marriage. An enthusiastic member of Kissory Chand Mitra's *Subrid Samiti* (Friends' Society), Radhanath conferred with his compatriots on the means of tackling such issues as widow marriage, polygamy and child marriage.

BOLD PROTESTER AGAINST TYRANNY

A bold and upright man, Radhanath created a sensation in the country by vehemently protesting against the practice of forced labour indulged in with impunity by the Company's servants. On 15th May 1843, Mr. H. Vansittart, District Magistrate of Dehra Dun, ordered some *coolies*, belonging to Radhanath Sikdar and his two colleagues, to carry his luggage gratis. Radhanath, as a measure of protest against this practice of forced labour stemming from unchecked administrative tyranny, prevented the *coolies* from executing the order and detained the Magistrate's luggage in his own quarters. On his failure to get his luggage released from detention, Vansittart sued Radhanath in the court of law. Radhanath, then a mere Sub-Assistant in the Survey Department, was sentenced by the Court to a fine of Rs. 200. Though penalized for insubordination, his bold action led to universal deprecation of the practice of forced labour. The whole incident was described by Radhanath himself in the 'Bengal Spectator' of 1 September 1843.

The fiery spirit of Young Bengal was reflected in the manly character of Radhanath. He passed away in tragic circumstances at Gondolpara in Chandernagore on 17 May 1870.

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RAMTANU LAHIRI

A man of sterling character and firm conviction, Ramtanu Lahiri was born at Baruihuda in December 1813. His father, Ramkrishna Lahiri, a small landowner of integrity and unimpeachable character, was the dewan of the wealthy Lala Babus, the younger scions of the family of the Maharajas of Nadia under whom the Lahiris had served as dewans for several generations. In 1826, at the age of 13, Ramtanu was admitted as a free scholar in Mr. Hare's School, after which he joined the Hindu College in 1828 with a scholarship. He showed good promise in the Fourth Class of Derozio in 1828 and won many a laurel by the time he finished his college studies in 1833.

In 1833, he was appointed on the tutorial staff of the Hindu College on Rs. 35/- a month. From April 1851 he worked in succession as Headmaster of the Burdwan School, the Uttarpara English School, Baraser School, Rassapagla English School and Barisal Zilla School. During his service career he also worked as teacher for three periods in the Krishnagar College, from where he retired in November 1865. Thereafter, on the recommendation of the Government, he worked for some time as guardian to the minors in the zamindar family of Gobardanga.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Ramtanu was deeply grateful to Derozio for the way the latter had taught him to love both freedom of thought and freedom of speech. These were the watchwords of the meetings eagerly attended by the 'Young Bengal' group in Derozio's house. It was also under Derozio's influence that he learnt the necessity of being straightforward and truthful in both word and deed in order to be useful to the cause of the social and moral regeneration of his countrymen.

Another parlour wherein the former Hindu College students, including Ramtanu, learnt to be critical of outdated and oppressive Hindu customs was that of Ramgopal Ghosh, the Demosthenes of

Bengal. It was here that preparations were made by them for the publication of the 'Gyananneshun' and the 'Bengal Spectator' both of which proved to be powerful organs of reform and progress in society. Realizing the necessity of diffusing knowledge beyond their immediate circle, these English-educated men established the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge in March 1838. Ramtanu was one of its Secretaries. Demure by nature, he was eager to be associated with every movement his progressive friends initiated to effect the much-needed mental awakening of their countrymen.

A firm believer in the usefulness of English education, he hailed Macaulay as the harbinger of light when, on 7 March 1835, the General Committee of Public Instruction was ultimately made to end its altercation in favour of imparting English education in India. Obviously enough, his awareness of the imperative needs of the times prompted him to do so, without diminishing a whit his high regard for Indian culture to the exclusion of all its useless customs and beliefs.

Renascent Bengal, however, fondly cherishes the memory of Ramtanu for the edifying example he set before the younger generation by living the truths he preached to them. His eagerness for knowledge combined with his humility, tolerance, truthfulness and a sense of duty towards the students imparted a singular distinctiveness to his character, which was hardly equalled by anyone else during his lifetime. If he never came to the class unprepared, he was also never loth to seek the aid of his colleagues while teaching in class. Knowledge was always welcome to him, no matter what its provenance was. He never took false pride in his own learning and never pretended to be omniscient, the common weakness of people with little learning.

He made his students realize that their future depended on the way they worked during their school life. It was in school that the foundation of their character and knowledge was laid. It was in school that they had to learn the means of developing their critical faculties. He, thus, laboured to make them depend more on their own thinking and power of expression than on cramming.

Ramtanu became a teacher at a time when the country needed good and conscientious educators. Rightly called the 'Arnold of Bengal', he helped every student to discover that he had in him the capacity for making himself useful to society. There were great headmasters like Peary Charan Sircar at Baraset, Iswar Chandra Banerjee

in Hooghly, Haragobinda Sen in Boalia and Bhudev Mukherjee in Howrah, but none of them succeeded as much as Ramtanu did in moulding the lives, thoughts and emotions of the students in such a way as to infuse new life into society.

CONTRIBUTION TO FEMALE EMANCIPATION

That to such a progressive-minded man the cause of female education and emancipation would be very dear was obvious. He whole-heartedly supported the female emancipation movement of the Brahmos in 1872. He firmly believed that women should be educated and allowed to come out in the open to mix freely in society. In seclusion they vegetated and continued to be a drag on the country's progress. Thus, when the champions of women's liberty started the Banga-Mahila School under the supervision of Miss Acroyd (afterwards Mrs. Beveridge), Ramtanu had his second daughter, Indumati, admitted there without any hesitation.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

It is over the vexed question of social reform and regeneration that Ramtanu proved his mettle. In the early fifties, he openly lined up with the young progressives in Krishnagar in support of the cause of widow remarriage. To stem the progress of this movement the orthodox Hindus spread the rumour that Ramtanu and his friends were all beef-eaters. Fear of social obloquy or loss of caste could not frighten Ramtanu into abandoning the cause of widow remarriage, though the movement suffered a temporary set-back in Krishnagar.

In 1851, while he was working as headmaster of the Burdwan School, he discarded the Brahmanical thread as a mark of protest against priestcraft in society. Since he was alleged to have taken beef, his detractors held that it was an act of hypocrisy on his part to perform the Sradh ceremony. So, in deference to the dictates of his conscience and reason he gave up the sacred thread, an act which came to be emulated by the Brahmos from 1861. But this action, for which Ramtanu felt no compunction, caused almost a traumatic shock to the orthodox Hindus. They reacted by pronouncing him an outcast. They deprived him of the services of washermen, barbers and all menials. But despite all taunts, insults and threats flung at him and his wife, he remained unshaken in his belief and continued to follow the favourite motto of his life, "Do what is right, and leave the rest to God."

From 1851 the urge in him to free the country from the shackles of prejudices and superstitions became stronger than ever. He himself broke away from all old beliefs and creeds which were found wanting in the light of his knowledge and critical investigation. He denounced the caste system as a social and moral evil. To him, those who silently submitted to the tyranny of superstitious customs were guilty of reprehensible weakness. Idolatry he hated, but he never thought of bringing about its subversion by openly attacking the Hindu idolaters.

He held that no tangible results could be achieved in the matter of reforming society if the reformers themselves did not free their minds from the taint of hypocrisy. This view of his is manifest in the letter he wrote to Rajnarayan Basu on 24 July 1846 about the way the Brahmos temporized while talking of reform. In the same letter he not only condemned the means employed by the Brahmos to effect the subversion of idolatry, but also their attack, through the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, on Christianity. Essentially a rationalist rising above all narrow prejudices, he wanted "the votaries of all religions to appeal to the reason of their fellow creatures", for he believed that those who had truth on their side would ultimately prevail.

Ramtanu probably became interested in the political problems of the country after the establishment of the Indian Association in 1876. The first National Conference held in Calcutta from 28 to 30 December, 1883, received more than fleeting attention from him. He presided over the inaugural meeting of the Conference on 28 December. This Conference discussed problems concerning Legislative Councils, vocational education, separation of the judiciary and the Indian Civil Service.

Ramtanu's broadmindedness was remarkable in an age of bigotry and pettiness. Universally revered for his saintliness, he was a model of conscience to his countrymen. His forthright condemnation of vice and hypocrisy was as much necessary for giving purpose and direction to the self-improving endeavours of his countrymen as his exhortation to them to stand by reason and truth always. His selfless devotion to the cause of education as well as of social regeneration reflected the true spirit of the renascence in Bengal, and the creation of his own spirit of consecration in those who came into contact with him was his greatest achievement. An enthusiastic supporter of the *New Brahmo Samaj*, Ramtanu Lahiri breathed his last on 18 August 1898.

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SHYAMACHARAN SHARMA SIRCAR

A self-taught linguist and legal expert, Shyamacharan Sharma Sircar was born at Mamjooan in Nadia on 20 March 1814. He lost his father, Haranarayan Sircar, at the age of 5. Enterprising and resourceful, he learnt with assiduity Persian, Hindi, Urdu, English, Arabic, Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and French. As testified to by Ramtanu Lahiri, Shyamacharan's acquaintance with these languages was not superficial.

He learnt these languages while he worked for his living in Calcutta. He taught Bengali and Hindi to Europeans and worked for some time as teacher of English in the English Department of the Sanskrit College before joining the Sadar Diwani Court, in February 1848, as peshkar and translator to Charles Tucker. In recognition of the excellence of his work he was appointed by Lord Dalhousie as Chief English Translator in 1850. He rose from that position to be the Chief Interpreter of the Supreme Court in July 1857. He retired in January 1873.

In 1872 and 1873, he was appointed the Tagore Law Lecturer of the Calcutta University on an honorarium of Rs. 10,000 a year. The publication of his lectures on Muhammedan Law earned him great reputation, which was further enhanced by his digests on Hindu Law written in Bengali.

MENTAL AWAKENING

To spread education among the poor he established, in 1858, a free school at Mamjooan, the place of his birth. He bore all its expenses until the Government came to its aid in September 1860.

He stressed the necessity of allowing the Bengali language to

enrich itself through the steady assimilation of Hindusthani and English words. English, he pointed out, had grown rich in vocabulary that way. He took immense pride in the Bengali language, which he considered superior to many of the European languages in vocabulary and expression.

POLITICAL AWAKENER

Shyamacharan was at one with Surendranath Banerjea, Sivanath Sastri, Manomohan Ghosh and many others on the necessity of establishing a middle-class political organization in the country. He presided over the meeting held on 26 July 1876 to inaugurate the Indian Association as well as to elect its office-bearers. Among those present were Anandamohan Basu, elected Secretary, Akshay Chandra Sircar and Jogendranath Vidyabhusan, both elected Assistant Secretaries, and Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya, Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya, Sivanath Sastri, Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, Rajkrishna Mukhopadhyaya, Manomohan Ghosh, Chandranath Basu, Nabagopal Mitra, Rajnarayan Basu, Bholanath Chandra, Surendranath Banerjea and many others.

Though a member of the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*, he never tolerated any sign of irreligion among the English-educated progressives in the country. His views on life and religion were very rational. He passed away on 14 July 1882.

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PEARY CHAND MITRA

Son of Ramnarayan Mitra, Peary Chand Mitra was born on 22 July 1814 in Calcutta. Educated at the Hindu College, where he might have been a pupil of Derozio, he made his mark as an admirable English scholar. An energetic member of the Academic Association, he was a great admirer of Derozio. Appointed Sub-Librarian of the Calcutta Public Library on 8 March 1836, he became its Librarian and Secretary in 1848. Though he resigned in 1866, he was persua-

ded to retain his connection with the Library as its Honorary Secretary and Librarian and, later, as a member of its Council. He was actively associated with many public institutions, including the Agri-Horticultural Society of India. He also carried on export-import business, first in cooperation with Kalachand Seth and Tarachand Chakrabarti and then on his own. His own firm was named 'Pearychand Mitra & Sons' in 1855. He was connected with many other firms as director. He was an Honorary Magistrate of Calcutta and a Justice of the Peace. From 18 January 1868 to 18 January 1870 he was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A towering personality of Young Bengal, Peary Chand did much for the political regeneration of his countrymen. Many of his writings in the 'Gyananneshun', the 'Bengal Spectator' and the 'Calcutta Review' gave expression, through analytical discussions, to the rights and grievances of Indians.

As one of the Secretaries to the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838) and later as one of the sponsors of the Bengal British India Society (1843), he, in cooperation with his like-minded friends, made articulate the demand for the larger admission of Indians to posts of trust and responsibility in the Company's Service. This demand was given edge by the book entitled 'Evidence relating to the Efficiency of Native Agency in the Administration of the Affairs in this Country', which was published by the Bengal British India Society with the help of Peary Chand.

As one of the stalwarts of the British Indian Association (1851), Peary Chand became more vocal in his demand not only for the increasing association of Indians with the Company's administration but also for their admission into the Covenanted Civil Service on the principle of free competition. On the eve of the renewal of the Charter Act a public meeting was held at the Town Hall on 29 July 1853, under the auspices of the British Indian Association, to air this demand together with other grievances of Indians. Another demand emphasized at this meeting as well as in Peary Chand's 'Notes on the Evidence of Indian Affairs' was the right of Indians for proper representation in the Legislative Council. His argument was that an Indian alone could be deemed most competent to report to the Council the sentiment of the people at large. He exposed the hollowness of

Halliday's evidence before Parliament that it was difficult to grant representation to Indians in the Council, as they were divided into two communities—Hindus and Muslims. Countering Halliday's plea for separate representation, he pointed out that legislation had very little connexion with religious differences.

The sudden reduction of the full marks for Sanskrit from 500 to 375 on the eve of the Civil Service Examination in 1864, which was responsible for the second failure of Manomohan Ghosh, as well as of the maximum age of the intending candidates from 22 to 21 in 1865, which closed the door of the Civil Service for good to Manomohan, led to the holding of a protest meeting in Calcutta on 19 July 1865 under the auspices of the British Indian Association. The resolution adopted strongly urged that the maximum age for the Civil Service should be fixed at 25 and the minimum at 21. Peary Chand, together with Ramanath Tagore, Rajendralal Mitra and others, played a prominent role in this agitation.

CHAMPION OF PEASANTS' RIGHTS

He emphatically stated that it was the Government's duty to protect the rights of the ryots against the oppression of the zamindars and indigo planters. In his article entitled 'The Zemindar and the Ryot' (Calcutta Review, No. XII, Vol. VI. 1846), he pointed out that the ryots' title to land should not be disturbed since they paid tax. He then ascribed the miseries of the ryots to "the grinding consequences of the sub-letting system" under the Permanent Settlement, to the "general inefficiency and apathy of the administrative authorities", to "the venality of the ministerial officers", to the tyranny of the indigo planters, to the bad influence of taxes upon legal proceedings.

He suggested the abolition of the stamp duty on judicial proceedings and the revival of village panchayats with a view to extending relief and justice to the poor ryots. Panchayats would also teach them self-help.

A fearless critic of injustice and oppression, his evidence before Dalhousie's Police Commission led to the dismissal of police officers guilty of corruption.

PROMOTER OF KNOWLEDGE

Peary Chand's faith in the diffusion of education and knowledge as the best means of dispelling darkness from society led him to

open a free school in the locality where he lived. The fundamental purpose behind his effort to help the spread of education was to create a spirit of enquiry among his countrymen. As a member of the School Book Society, he did much for the education of children.

To spread useful knowledge about agriculture in Bengali among the people, Peary Chand persuaded the Agri-Horticultural Society to set up a Translation Committee. Peary Chand and Sib Chandra Deb selected important articles, published in the Transactions and Journal of the Society, for translation into Bengali. The publication of the *Bharatbarshiya Krishibishayak Bibidha Sangraha* (The Agricultural Miscellany) would not have been possible but for the unremitting endeavours of Peary Chand.

The Vernacular Literature Society, which did some useful translation work for spreading knowledge, owes much of its success to Peary Chand.

Needless to say, Peary Chand was also a staunch advocate of female education.

SOCIAL REFORMER

A liberal, he did not hesitate to condemn customs and practices which hampered the reform and progress of society. Child marriage and polygamy were repugnant to his mind. He wrote in support of widow remarriage in the 'Calcutta Review'. His papers read before the Bethune Society and the Bengal Social Science Association as well as his humorous work *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (published serially in the *Masic Patrika*) conduced to the creation of a strong public feeling against the perpetuation of evil customs in society. The vice of drinking was condemned by him in his short stories about drunkards. Rightly did the Rev. James Long call him "the Dickens of Bengal".

PROMOTER OF THE VERNACULAR

By using simple Bengali in his novels and stories Peary Chand ushered in a new age in the history of the development of the Bengali language and its literature. His flowing and colloquial style, free from Sanskritized Bengali words, created a wide scope for bringing Bengali literature to the door of the common man.

A towering figure of renascent Bengal, Peary Chand Mitra passed away on 23 November 1883.

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DAKSHINARANJAN MUKHERJEE

Son of Paramananda Mukherjee, a sound Sanskrit and Persian scholar, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee was born in Calcutta in October 1814. Educated at Mr. Hare's School and the Hindu College, where he was the pupil of Derozio, he won distinction for his English composition. His classmates in the Hindu College were Ramgopal Ghosh, Peary Chand Mitra, Krishnamohan Banerjee, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Sibchandra Deb and Radhanath Sikdar. As an active member of the Academic Association, he developed a spirit of enquiry which led him to challenge orthodoxy and superstitious customs.

Though not a successful lawyer, the Government appointed him the Collector of Calcutta. He resigned it in 1851 and then successively worked as Secretary to the Maharaja of Tripura and as Dewan Nizamat to the Nawab of Murshidabad. In 1859, he became the Talukdar of Sankarpur in Oudh. In 1871, the Government conferred on him the title of 'Raja'.

ADVOCATE OF A FREE PRESS

Dakshinaranjan was a staunch champion of the freedom of the Press. He felt that a free Press could not only help the cause of social reform but promote political consciousness among the people as well. His *Gyananneshun* (1831), which became a bilingual weekly in 1832, admirably served the cause of progress and reform for thirteen years.

When Metcalfe lifted the restrictions on the freedom of the Press by Act XI of 1835, Dakshinaranjan expressed his deep sense of gratitude in a public speech at the Town Hall. He said: "The proposed law is well calculated to promote the benefit of the country;

for no country so much needs a free Press as that whose government is despotic".

As a Talukdar in Oudh, he continued the tradition of the *Gyananneshun* by bringing out the *Samachar Hindusthani* and *Bharati* on behalf of the Oudh British Indian Association. When the *Samachar Hindusthani* languished, he bought up 'The Lucknow Times' and used it to point out defects in Government policy whenever it went against the public interests.

A CRITIC OF THE ADMINISTRATION

The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (1838) was the accredited organ of Young Bengal, and Dakshinaranjan was one of its acknowledged stalwarts. In one of its sittings at the Hindu College on 8 February 1843, he read his famous paper on the 'Present Condition of the East India Company's Courts of Judicature and Police under the Bengal Presidency'. After exposing the gross corruption rampant in the mofussil courts, where every man, from the peon to the sheristadar, had his price, he said that the entire process was "one of extortion and corruption in which the weaker and proper parties invariably went to the wall". The entire resources of the country were exploited by the British for their own benefit. Lastly, what he most vehemently condemned was the slavish attitude which the British forced Indian zamindars to adopt in their intercourse with the bureaucrats. To remedy the situation, he suggested that Indians should be increasingly associated with the administration of the country and that they should have a strong organization to voice their grievances. His paper created a great stir in the country.

Dakshinaranjan stressed the same suggestions in an earlier speech delivered at the Maniktala Garden House on 6 February 1843. He asked: "Was it not right and proper that those who necessarily knew so much of the country, in consequence of their having been born and educated on the soil, should be permitted to share the places of trust and emolument, now monopolised by Europeans, and contribute their aid in the due administration of the law?" It was his conviction that unless Indians undertook "the work of exposure and reformation", corruption would spread everywhere.

POLITICAL ORGANIZER

A stalwart of the Bengal British India Society (1843) and a regular contributor to the 'Bengal Spectator', Dakshinaranjan's

political thought attained maturity by the time he came to be intimately associated with the British Indian Association (1851). His competence also as a political organizer increased with time. Though a loyalist Talukdar in Oudh, he did not hesitate to found the Oudh British Indian Association on 26 March 1861. A replica of the British Indian Association of Calcutta, it strove to promote the interests of both the landlords and the people.

In 1870, he began an agitation for setting up Provincial Representative Councils, each "composed of government nominees and representatives of the people in equal numbers". The representatives were to be "appointed quinquennially from the people of every district by electors possessing a reasonable property qualification". Further, these Councils were to check and examine "the accounts to be furnished to them by all the Departmental Heads of the provincial government and to advise government as to the proper mode of levying taxes, when the exigencies of the state may absolutely require it". There was also to be a Supreme Council composed of members, "one half of whom should be nominated by government and the other half by these Provincial Councils, i.e., every Provincial Council sending a member". It was an admirable plan for furthering India's political progress.

PROMOTER OF FEMALE EDUCATION

Dakshinaranjan was a staunch advocate of female education. He was the founder of a girls' school at Baithakkhana in Calcutta. When Bethune established the Hindu Female School in May 1849, Dakshinaranjan gave it accommodation in the parlour of his house at Sukea Street. When Bethune planned to house it in a commodious building, Dakshinaranjan made over a piece of land worth Rs. 12,000 for the purpose. On 6 November 1850, the foundation of the School was laid on this land by Sir John Littler, Deputy Governor of Bengal. He also exerted himself to secure girls of respectable families for the School.

SOCIAL REFORMER

A rebel in society, he gave ready asylum to Krishnamohan Banerjea when the latter was ostracized for the beef-eating incident in his house. This generosity cost him the shelter of his father's house. That apart, he not only preached but also practised intercaste marriage, civil marriage and widow marriage.

A man of action, he passed away on 15 July 1878.

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RAMGOPAL GHOSH

Ramgopal Ghosh, one of the firebrands of Young Bengal, was born in 1815 at Baghaty in the district of Hooghly. His father, Gobinda Chandra Ghosh, was a small trader in Calcutta. Educated at Mr. Sherbourne's School and then in the Hindu College, he made his way into the literary coterie formed by Krishnamohan Banerjea, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Peary Chand Mitra, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Radhanath Sikdar under the presidency of Derozio. As a member of the Academic Association, he took an active part in its discussions and excelled as a smart debater.

Starting his career as an Assistant to Mr. Joseph, who came to Calcutta to trade with the East Indies, Ramgopal soon became the banian of the firm. He then worked as a partner of Messrs. Kelsall, Ghosh & Co., till he set up in 1848 his own firm called R. G. Ghosh & Co.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

To him, education was the best means of removing ignorance and superstition that gripped the country. He closely cooperated with David Hare in setting up schools. He himself established a school and a library in his locality. He was Secretary to the Benevolent Institution. His aversion for the proselytization activities of the Christian missionaries led him to support the establishment of the Hindu Charitable Institution in March 1846.

Because of his interest in education and spirit of public service, Bethune made him a member of the Council of Education. To him goes the credit of having initiated the grant-in-aid system in Bengal. It began with the monthly grant given to the Janai Training School.

A keen supporter of Dwarkanath's scheme for sending four medical students to England for higher studies in medicine and

surgery, he actively helped Bethune in founding the Female School on 7 May in 1849.

He was one of the pioneers in establishing the Calcutta University. In his Minute of 29 March 1854, submitted to the Council of Education in reply to Grant's draft, he declared: "The first thing that strikes me is that this is a fitting opportunity to propose. . . . the establishment of a University. . . . Why deny to your eleves the distinction of University titles and honours to which the students of every civilised country are entitled? The highest standard fixed may not be attained for several years to come, but the sooner it is fixed and announced, the sooner will it be reached. . . . I presume the capacity of the native mind of the highest degree of improvement is not questioned".

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Ramgopal was intimately associated with the journals, 'Gyananeshun' and the 'Bengal Spectator', both effective mouthpieces of Young Bengal and designed to disseminate progressive ideas among the educated people. He was one of the sponsors of the 'Epistolary Association' which tried to keep alive the Derozian spirit of enquiry through discussions of important matters in mutual correspondence. This Association soon gave way to the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge founded in 1838. The spirit of criticism in political matters among the Derozians came to be sharpened further by the Bengal British India Society, which was founded with the blessings of George Thompson in April 1843. Like Tarachand Chakrabarti, Ramgopal also was one of its stalwarts; and the leading spirits of this Society came to be derisively called "the Chukerverty faction". Together with George Thompson, "the mighty Ramgopal" also delivered fiery speeches at the Fouzdaree Balakhana on political rights denied to his countrymen by the British Government.

An untiring advocate of the demand for the larger admission of Indians to posts of trust and responsibility in the Company's Service, Ramgopal was not satisfied with the Government's policy of accommodating Indians in the Uncovenanted Service as Deputy Collectors (from 1833) and Deputy Magistrates (from 1843). At the famous Town Hall meeting of 29 July 1853, convened on the eve of the renewal of the Charter, he demanded, in the midst of thunderous applause, the opening of the door of the Covenanted Civil Service to educated Indians. To him, Sir Charles Wood's

ministerial scheme of 3 June 1853 was not satisfactory because it contained no assurance of removing the exclusive character of the Civil Service. He pointed out that so long as Haileybury and Addiscombe were maintained "as the only media" through which candidates could enter the Covenanted Civil Service, the term "unlimited competition" would continue to be meaningless to Indians. He also severely criticized the proposed constitution of the Legislative Council which did not represent "native views, native feelings and native talents". His speech created great enthusiasm for the petition sent to Parliament on Wood's ministerial scheme.

ADVOCATE OF LEGAL EQUALITY

Ramgopal was an unflinching advocate of equality between Europeans and Indians in the eye of the law of the country. An attempt was made to introduce this equality in courts of law by four Draft Acts of Bethune in 1849. They were: (1) An Act for abolishing exemption from the jurisdiction of the East India Company's Criminal Courts; (2) An Act declaring the Law as to the privilege of Her Majesty's European subjects; (3) An Act for trial by jury; (4) An Act for the protection of Judicial Officers. The first three were published in the Calcutta Gazette of 31 October 1849 and the fourth in the Calcutta Gazette of 21 November of 1849. Colour-conscious Europeans held a meeting at the Town Hall on 29 December 1849 and condemned these Drafts as "Black Acts" in the memorial submitted by them to the Government. Their mounting opposition led Ramgopal to bring out a pamphlet entitled 'A Few Remarks on Certain Draft Acts, Commonly called Black Acts', wherein he fully defended all the Acts excepting the fourth one, which tended to weaken the check on the wanton abuse of power by judicial officers. He pointed out that there was "no illegality, injustice or impolicy" in the Acts, as alleged by Europeans. He wrote: "Is it just, is it fair, is it honest, that a hundred millions of Her Majesty's native subjects should be taxed so that the European delinquent from the most distant corners of the Empire may enjoy the benefit of being judged by English laws instead of the East India Company's regulation? Englishmen should blush to perpetuate such an iniquitous system." Referring to the plight of the ryots, he wrote: "He (Ryot) must bear and be content that the Englishman is a superior being, that he cannot be touched.... he cannot be polluted by the contamination of the same laws which govern such animals as you".

He then analyzed the manifold tyranny of the indigo planters and concluded: "I feel warranted on my own experience to declare emphatically that this circumstance has given rise to a feeling in Bengal among the lower orders of the people, that there is no practical remedy against the depredations and cruelties of the European planter". Unfortunately, however, the Government yielded to European opposition and withdrew the Draft Acts. As for Ramgopal, he was expelled by Europeans from the Agri-Horticultural Society of which he was the Vice-President.

Undaunted, he participated in the public meeting, held at the residence of Radhakanta Deb on 26 August 1861, to criticize Justice Sir Mordaunt Wells, who called natives "a nation of perjurers and forgers" in connection with the *Nil Durpan* case.

AGITATION ABROAD

While Ramgopal was educating public opinion at home, he was also conferring with Adams on the possibility of setting up a political forum in England to voice Indian grievances. This is revealed in his letter of 12 August 1838 to Gobinda Chandra Bysack. He felt that an informed Parliament could exercise effective pressure on the apathetic local government for the ready redress of Indian grievances. His idea was taken up at a later date and much of it was fulfilled.

SOCIAL REFORMER

In social matters, Ramgopal was a crusader against Hindu orthodoxy. He was an earnest champion of widow marriage and took pains to promote the noble cause. A philanthropist, he was President of the Native Committee of the District Charitable Society. He could not tolerate any act of foreigners which offended native feeling. At the meeting of Calcutta Justices of the Peace (7 March 1864), he vehemently protested against the proposal of removing the Hindu burning ghat from Nimtalla. His eloquent speech helped him to thwart the proposal.

Aptly called the "Indian Demosthenes", Ramgopal Ghosh passed away on 25 January 1868.

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DEBENDRANATH TAGORE

One of the high priests of Bengal's social and moral regeneration as well as of Indian nationalism in the nineteenth century, Debendranath Tagore, the eldest son of Dwarkanath Tagore, was born at Jorasanko in Calcutta on 15 May 1817.

He had his early education at Rammohun Roy's Anglo-Hindu School. In 1831, after the storm over the teachings of Derozio had subsided, he joined the Hindu College and was there for about two years. As his father wanted him to be in business, he had to give up his studies and allow himself to be trained in banking at the Union Bank by his uncle, Ramanath Tagore. At the same time he was put through his paces in business at Carr, Tagore & Co. But born as he was with a religious bent of mind, he felt attracted more towards philosophy and man's eternal quest for the Divine Being than towards his father's business. Dwarkanath was fully aware of this otherworldliness of his son.

Messrs. Carr, Tagore & Co. and the Union Bank did not long survive Dwarkanath's death in England in August 1846. They were closed down on 31 December 1847 and 15 January 1848 respectively, leaving for Debendranath and his brothers a burden of debts amounting to a crore of rupees. But these were all cleared off by them with admirable honesty within a few years.

Debendranath was a widely-travelled man. He visited even Burma. It was in 1856-57 that a tremendous change came over him. Disgusted at the failure of his associates to preach the Brahma faith according to his wishes and impelled by a desire to know the Omnipotent, he left for the Simla hills on 3 October 1856 and took to deep meditation in solitude. After communicating with the "Transcendent Vitality", he returned to Calcutta on 15 November 1858 and entered upon a career of religious reform.

When he formally accepted the Brahma faith by signing the Covenant on 21 December 1843, he was a Vedantist. But after 1849 he ceased to treat the Vedas as infallible. His *Brahma Dharma Vyakhyan* (Exposition of the *Brahma Dharma*), published after his return from Simla, gave a new direction to the activities of the Brahmo Samaj with which his *Tattwabodhini Sabha* had been merged in May 1850. In 1866, with the secession of Keshab Chandra Sen, Debendranath's *Brahmo Samaj* came to be called the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*. He spent the last days of his life in his quiet retreat at Bolpur called Santiniketan, which was dedicated by a trust deed to theistic worship.

MENTAL AWAKENER

In spite of his English education, Debendranath was a thorough patriot in his love for Indian culture. At a time when it was the fashion to speak in English at debates and meetings, the past and the present students of the Anglo-Hindu School established the *Sarbatattwadipika Sabha* in 1832, with Ramaprasad Roy as President and 15-year-old Debendranath as Secretary, to improve the use of Bengali by holding debates in that language only.

When young, he deemed it his duty to acquire knowledge and impart it to others to the best of his ability. And so he became a member of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, established under the presidency of Tarachand Chakrabarti in 1838. The same purpose came to be served on a larger scale by the Bethune Society, formed in December 1851 under the joint auspices of Debendranath, Dr. J. F. Mouat, the Rev. J. Long, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ramgopal Ghosh, Peary Chand Mitra, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee, Radhanath Sikdar and others. It arranged lectures by experts on topics relating to Political Science and Indian Economics, without, however, agitating for political reform.

But his heart was not in English education. What he actually wanted, in the interest of the mental awakening of his countrymen, was the spread of the knowledge of the literature and science of India and Europe through the Bengali language. His *Tattwabodhini Sabha*, established on 6 October 1839, was asked to promote this purpose. The Sabha went ahead with its preparations and founded the *Tattwabodhini Pathshala* on 13 June 1840. It was placed under the care of Akshay Kumar Datta, the most trusted lieutenant of Debendranath, who felt that this was the only means to instill in the rising youths a love of their culture and language, which had been neglected in

English schools since 1835. Debendranath himself wrote textbooks, including a Sanskrit grammar in Bengali. His principal coadjutor in this task was Akshay Kumar Datta. Much valuable information on the Vedas was included in some of the textbooks.

But the Pathsala, with its vernacular bias, failed to stand competition with English schools. It had thus to be shifted to Bansberia in the Hooghly district and formally opened there on 30 April 1843 under the care of Shyamacharan Dattabagish. Though provision was made for imparting education in Bengali, English and Sanskrit, the emphasis was pronouncedly on the teaching of the Shastras. It was felt, as expressed by Akshay Kumar Datta in his inaugural speech, that unless the students were given instruction in their own language and religion, the language of the English was bound to become the language of this land and their religion would become the religion of the Indians. The note of patriotism is too distinct to be mistaken by anyone. But, unfortunately, this Pathsala had to be closed down in 1848 after the failure of Messrs. Carr, Tagore & Co., which involved Debendranath in heavy debts. It did not, however, lessen his interest in the cause of vernacular education. His liberal donations to the funds of the Barrackpore Pathsala and the Suksagar School in Nadia prove it.

AVERSION FOR PROSELYTIZATION

Behind Debendranath's attempts to spread the use of the Bengali language as well as the knowledge of the Shastras and the Vedas was his innate aversion for the proselytization activities of the Christian missionaries, who found in the eagerness of the Indian youths to learn the English language and to imitate English manners and customs a very good opportunity for gaining converts. His *Tattwabodhini Sabha*, with its three instruments, viz., the *Tattwabodhini Pathsala*, the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* and the diffusion of Vedic knowledge through persons well versed in the Vedas, endeavoured to drive home to the Hindu youths the richness of their culture and the greatness of their religion. A note of patriotism—a sense of nationalism—underlay all his efforts to prevent the Christian evangelists from undermining the Hindu religion and society. In this task he was well supported by Radhakanta Deb, President of the *Dharma Sabha*.

Debendranath could not tolerate the educated youths' growing disdain for and disbelief in the Hindu religion. This, among other reasons, prompted him to form the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*, which

steadily worked to inspire in them a regard for the higher form of Hinduism, based on the idea of the unity of the Godhead and free from idolatry and the divisive influence of multifarious rites and rituals. The propagation of the quintessence of the Vedas and the Upanishads, which also constituted the basis of the Brahma faith, had the desired effect of bringing together both the English-educated progressives and conservatives in a common stand against the proselytization activities of the Christian missionaries. What is more important is the fact that those who had become sceptical of Hinduism accepted the Brahma faith and did not thus go to swell the ranks of the Indian converts.

At the same time the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* was started in 1843 under the editorship of Akshay Kumar Datta. It published articles which tended to promote the mental and moral regeneration of Indians. These articles were selected for publication by a committee of experts. With this committee men like Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Rajnarayan Basu, Ramaprasad Roy, Sambhunath Pandit, Rajendralal Mitra were associated from time to time. Apart from articles on the Brahma faith and the Shastras, the Patrika published patriotic writings on the evils of Christianization, on the necessity of spreading female education, on temperance, on the oppression of the indigo planters, on social reform, etc. In its attempts to combat proselytization the Patrika succeeded in making Indians conscious of their cultural heritage as well as of the needs of their society.

The agitation against proselytization became more articulate with the conversion of Umesh Chandra Sircar and his wife by Dr. Alexander Duff in April 1845. After a vain appeal had been made to the Supreme Court by Umesh Chandra's elder brother, Debendranath asked Akshay Kumar Datta to use his pen in the Patrika to awaken the Hindus to the growing threat to the solidarity of their society. The spirited article thus published was a full-blooded condemnation of the missionaries' policy of conversion which invaded even the *zenana* apartments of the Hindu families. Hindu parents were asked not to send their wards to the missionary schools.

To counteract the influence of the free missionary schools Debendranath, Radhakanta Deb, Matilal Seal, Ramgopal Ghosh, Ramaprasad Roy, Tarachand Chakrabarti, Kashiprasad Ghosh and many others cooperated to found on 1 March 1846 the Hindu Charitable Institution, which was a free school for poor Hindu boys. In the heat of their burning zeal the rivalry between the *Dharma*

Sabha and the *Brahma Sabha* melted. Unity became their watchword in the face of what they considered to be a common danger. Debendranath records in his autobiography that this school effectively curbed the activities of the missionaries. But a financial crisis, following the failure of the Union Bank in January 1848, so severely impaired its position that it rapidly declined and passed out of existence by 1860-61.

Even as a member of the Hindu College Managing Committee since his father's death in August 1846, Debendranath could not tolerate the idea of either Hindu teachers or students embracing Christianity. The conversion of Kailash Chandra Basu, a teacher, in 1848 and of Gurucharan Singha, a second-year student, in 1849 angered Debendranath beyond measure and caused a great crisis in the affairs of the Managing Committee. And despite his declining belief in the infallibility of the Vedas from 1849, he remained an uncompromising opponent of the converts in the Hindu College till 15 April 1855, the last day of his membership of its Managing Committee.

His aversion for proselytization made him cooperate with many Hindu leaders, including Radhakanta Deb, who resigned his membership of the Hindu College Managing Committee in June 1850, to establish on 2 May 1853 the Hindu Metropolitan College, immune from Government control and missionary influence. Both he and Asutosh Deb, in spite of their membership of the Hindu College Managing Committee, boldly came forward to become members of the Managing Committee of this new college.

Debendranath's dissatisfaction with the Government's indifferent attitude to evangelization did not, however, stand in the way of his cooperating with the Council of Education to promote the study of Sanskrit in the Bengal Presidency. Lord Hardinge received his full support in the matter of opening a hundred vernacular schools since 18 December 1844.

MASS EDUCATION

When in May 1859 the Bengal Government sought the opinion of non-official gentlemen on the means of spreading mass education, Debendranath, in his statement of 8 August 1859, suggested the adoption of means which had been effectively used by the Calcutta School Book Society. Like the School Book Society, the Government should undertake the publication and sale of suitable textbooks in

Bengali at moderate prices. But he took care to stress the need of bestowing greater attention upon the existing institutions and of imparting moral education to students. Lastly, he expressed his belief that the removal of men's ignorance through properly-oriented mass education would automatically facilitate the progress of female education in the country.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL REFORMER

A religious reformer, Debendranath's ambition was to unite his countrymen through his Brahma faith based on the lofty theism of the Upanishads. This alone, he believed, could lead to the revival of India's strength and ultimately to her independence. To him, the most effective means to achieve political freedom lay in the attainment of religious unity.

His position in the history of renascent Bengal as a social reformer is not negligible. He was the President of the Friends' Social Welfare Society, which was established at Kissory Chand Mitra's Cossipore residence on December 1853. Among its stalwarts were Raja Satyacharan Ghosal, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Rasik Krishna Mallick, Akshay Kumar Datta, Digambar Mitra, Radhanath Sikdar and Sib Chandra Deb. It decided to promote female education as well as to carry on agitation for widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage and polygamy.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Though spreading the Brahma faith became his obsession, Debendranath's contribution to the awakening of the country's political consciousness was not inconsiderable. He joined hands with Tarachand Chakrabarti in demanding a larger admission of Indians into all branches of the Company's Service. At the public meeting of 18 April 1843 he moved the first resolution which proposed the vote of thanks to John Sullivan, who had effectively interceded with Parliament for the admission of Indians to all offices of trust and responsibility in the Company's administration.

In 1849 the broadsides fired by Ramgopal Ghosh upon the "Black Act" agitation of the Europeans stirred the national consciousness of Indians. The thinking section felt that something should be done to place before Parliament Indian demands on the eve of the renewal of the Charter in 1853. The Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society, which had declined in cohesion and had

virtually ceased to function by the beginning of the eighteen-fifties, were no longer deemed capable of delivering the goods individually on behalf of India, though many notable personalities were simultaneously members of both the organizations.

The vacuum had to be filled—the sooner the better. Thus on 14 September 1851 Debendranath, Prasannacoomar Tagore, Raja Pratap Narayan Singha and others jointly sponsored the revival of the Landholders' Society under the new name of the National Association. Debendranath became its Secretary. Dissatisfaction with some Government laws as well as with the British judicial administration and eagerness to assert the legal rights of Indians supplied the motivation to the activities of this Association. But since the landholders, "the aristocracy of wealth", dominated the National Association, it was found wanting in many respects. Hence, on 31 October 1851 the Association coalesced with the dormant Bengal British India Society, "the aristocracy of intelligence", to form a truly powerful organization called the British Indian Association, which had no provision for European membership. With this merger the split between orthodoxy and enlightenment—between conservatism and liberalism—was gone to the great surprise of the British rulers.

As the first honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association till his resignation on 13 January 1854, Debendranath vehemently criticized the Act which threw upon the poor Indian villagers the responsibility of maintaining chowkidars for their protection at their own expense. This responsibility, he rightly pointed out, belonged to the Government.

Keenly feeling the injustice of the salt tax, he protested, on behalf of the Association, against the heavy fine to which zamindars were made liable for any infraction on their part of the Government monopoly of salt manufacture within their zamindary. In the petition submitted to the Government he did not fail to refer to the foolishness of punishing poor ryots who might "boil a little of the saline earth" for salt.

He also voiced the common grievance of the landholders against the Government's resumption of rent-free lands (lakhiraj). But the most important thing done during his secretaryship was the submission of a Memorial to Parliament. It proposed that self-government be granted to British territories in India. And as the first step to it, the Government was requested to introduce legislative councils with Indian members in the majority.

Debendranath, with his breadth of vision, realized at this moment the necessity of making the Association an all-India organization. Thus, on 11 December 1851 he wrote to the leaders of Madras and Bombay, soliciting their cooperation in matters which concerned them in a body. He urged them all to unite if they wanted to make their grievances appreciated by Parliament on the eve of the renewal of the Charter. And the desired unity could be achieved if they all combined to maintain one single agent in London at less expense, instead of having separate agents who, to the delight of the rulers, could not speak or act in unison. This was a move in the right direction. Madras and Bombay opened branches of the Association, which augured well for the future of India.

Debendranath retired from active politics in 1854. A nationalist even in the matter of religion, he never quoted the Christian Scriptures in his religious discourses. "To him ancient India was the cradle of all that was pure in morals and religion". For him the Indian Scriptures were complete and sufficient in themselves. "His religion was Indian in origin and expression, it was Indian in ideas and in spirit". The Brahma of the Upanishads was the God of his worship. But his ecstatic life of contemplation did not interfere with his intense interest in the events of his time or in his countrymen. The best legacy he left to his famous son, Rabindranath, was his deep passion for nature and his sane and balanced outlook upon humanity. Reverently called the *Maharsi*, he died on 19 January 1905.

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DIGAMBAR MITRA

Son of Sivachandra Mitra, Digambar Mitra was born at Konnagar in 1817. Educated at Mr. Hare's School and the Hindu College, where he was a pupil of Derozio, he grew into an accom-

plished man. His career was chequered. A teacher, clerk, tehsildar, manager of estates, businessman and a stock exchange speculator, he became a rich landholder in course of time. His stewardship of Krishnanath Roy's estates was a turning point in his career. It gave him experience in rural economy and brought him a reward of one lakh in recognition of his service. On that capital he built up his business in silk and indigo, which brought him a fabulous fortune.

His connexion with the Union Bank helped him to develop an intimacy with the Tagores, specially Dwarkanath Tagore. An Assistant Secretary to the British Indian Association in 1851, he later became its President. He was also a member of the Legislative Council for three years from 1864. He was Sheriff of Calcutta in 1874. The Government conferred on him many honours, including the title of Raja.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

His participation in the agitation, launched by the British Indian Association, against Wood's Ministerial Scheme on the eve of the renewal of the Charter of 1853 brought him into the limelight of public affairs. In the Memorial penned by him, he pointed out the grievances of the Indians. To him, the land tax was heavy; public works of utility helpful to the development of Indian resources were few; the levy of the stamp duty on judicial proceedings was unjust; the education imparted to Indians was inadequate; the denial of the right to posts of trust and responsibility to Indians was unjustifiable.

ADVOCATE OF LEGAL EQUALITY

Digambar emerged as an orator on the occasion of the "Black Act" meeting organised by the British Indian Association at the Town Hall on 6 April 1857 in reply to the meeting held by the European community to denounce Peacock's Bill. He pointed out that the charge of inadequate legal training brought against Indian judicial officers was equally applicable to their covenanted superiors. He added that antagonism of race and prejudice of caste had rendered the covenanted officers "totally unfit to be impartial judges in cases in which the British subjects were concerned". He maintained that, in the ultimate analysis, Indian judicial officers were qualified and that European offenders should be made amenable to the mofussil Criminal Courts.

SPOKESMAN OF THE PEOPLE

In 1862, he, along with Ramanath Tagore, represented the British Indian Association in the Income Tax Conference convened by the Government of India to amend the Income Tax Act of 1860. His suggestions contributed much to the reduction of the oppressive tax burden on the people.

In his Town Hall speech of 2 March 1878 he pleaded for a further reduction of taxes on the over-burdened people as well as for a more economical administration. The Indian peasant, he pointed out, was not in a position to meet the ever-increasing demand for more revenue.

He believed that if the Government trained the people to act for themselves, the progress of the country could be hastened in all spheres of life. It was a mistake on the part of the Government to keep the people deprived of all power of action.

A moderate social reformer, his life came to a close on 20 April 1879.

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RAMAPRASAD ROY

Son of Raja Rammohun Roy, Ramaprasad Roy was born in July 1817 (12 Sraban 1224 B.S.). Educated at the Anglo-Hindu School, the Parental Academy and the Hindu College, he was reputed, like his father, for his knowledge of Sanskrit and Persian. In 1838, he was appointed a Deputy Collector. But he gave up this office in 1845 in favour of private legal practice at the Sadar Diwani Court, where he succeeded in getting himself enrolled with the help of Bethune. Because of his unchallengeable legal knowledge, he was appointed Government pleader by Lord Dalhousie, after the retirement of Prasannacoomar Tagore in August 1850. In 1861, he was appointed the Legal Remembrancer in place of Mr. Beaufort. In 1862, he was nominated to the Legislative Council of Bengal, and in the same year he was appointed the first Indian Judge of the High

Court. But he died before he could assume his new office, which was therefore given by Lord Elgin to Sambhunath Pandit.

MENTAL AWAKENER

In 1832, as President of the *Sarbatattwadipika Sabha*, of which Debendranath Tagore was the Secretary, he espoused the cause of improving the use of Bengali by holding debates in that language only. This combined patriotic effort, with which Joygopal Basu, Nabin Madhab De and Dwarkanath Mitra were also associated, was made at a time when it was the prevailing fashion to speak in English at debates and meetings.

An important member of the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*, he fully subscribed to Debendranath Tagore's view that the knowledge of the literature and science of India and Europe should be diffused through the Bengali language. The *Tattwabodhini Pathshala*, opened with this end in view in 1840, received his unstinted aid and co-operation. When the Pathshala had to be shifted to Bansberia in April 1843, he again came forward to help the execution of the plan.

His aversion for missionary proselytization made him cooperate with Debendranath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Ramgopal Ghosh and others in establishing the Hindu Charitable Institution in 1846.

He was also a member of the Paper-Committee, which selected articles for publication in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, a paper started in 1843 to promote the mental and moral regeneration of Indians.

A stalwart of female education, Ramaprasad held that the Government should be more persevering in this sphere of activity. He saw no bar to the appointment of European tutoresses to teach Indian girls at home. His keen interest in this matter led to his election as President of the Native Female Education Branch of the Bethune Society in 1859. Harachandra Datta assisted him as Secretary.

Lastly, as a Fellow of the Calcutta University, he, together with Prasannacoomar Tagore, gave an impetus to the study of Law in a systematic manner. It enabled students to understand better the administrative, political and social problems of the country.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Ramaprasad fully identified himself with all social movements aimed at redeeming women from their miserable existence. He supported Vidyasagar's widow remarriage agitation in 1855-56.

When Vidyasagar launched another agitation for the abolition of the iniquitous practice of polygamy, Ramaprasad not merely extended his support to him, but also submitted a petition on his own in February 1857, requesting the Government to curb the evil by a legislative enactment. But this anti-polygamy movement failed because of the outbreak of the Mutiny, which made the Government very wary about attempting any more reform of Hindu social customs through legislation.

Though not exactly a chip of the old block, Ramaprasad, as described by Girish Chandra Ghosh, the renowned editor of the 'Bengalee', "was second to none of his contemporaries in point of genius, sound legal acquirements, sterling common sense, breadth of view and genuine sympathy for the just rights of the ryots of this Presidency". He died at the height of his fame on 1 August 1862.

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MADANMOHAN TARKALANKAR

Son of Ramdhan Chattopadhyaya, Madanmohan Tarkalankar was born at Billagram in Nadia in 1817. He had his education at the Sanskrit College, where he was the classmate of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. He passed the Law Committee's Smriti Examination held in December 1841.

A reputed Sanskrit scholar, he taught in several institutions—the Hindu College Pathsala, Barasat Government School, the Fort William College, Krishnagar College—before joining the Sanskrit College as Professor of Literature on 27 June 1846. He resigned this office in November 1850 to become a Judge-Pandit, from which position he was promoted to the post of Deputy Magistrate in December 1855. Vidyasagar had all along helped him during his career in Government service.

PROMOTER OF FEMALE EDUCATION

Madanmohan was a great champion of female education, in spite of his orthodox background. When the Hindu Female School came to be established by Bethune on 7 May 1849, Madanmohan boldly sent his two daughters for education there. He ranks with

Ramgopal Ghosh, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyaya and Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar in his endeavour to consolidate the position of the infant institution that Bethune had founded. He attended the school daily and gave gratuitous instruction to children in Bengali. He also compiled a series of elementary Bengali books (*Sisusiksha*, Parts I, II, and III) expressly for their use. Time has not yet been able to wear off their worth in a Bengali household. These services of his were gratefully acknowledged by Bethune.

To remove the ingrained prejudice of his orthodox countrymen against female education, Madanmohan wrote a long article in the second number of the journal named *Sarbasubhakari* in 1850. That orthodox opposition to female education was based on untenable grounds was proved beyond doubt by him. He held that Indian women were not inferior to men in intelligence. European ladies were useful to their society in India because they were educated. Then he went on to say that to educate girls was a common practice in ancient India. Gargi, Maitreyi, Lilavati and many other illustrious names were mentioned by him to show that educated women in India had not only once held their own in intelligence and erudition against learned men, but had also set a very high standard of morality, of which they could all be proud. The point that education would encourage licentiousness in women was, therefore, meaningless. He added that because of the invasion of India by the Yavanas, Hindus stopped educating their daughters and kept them in seclusion. Since Europeans were not tyrannical and illiberal like the Yavanas, there was no reason for Hindus to persist in their old habit of keeping women in seclusion and ignorance. This apart, educating daughters, like sons, was a duty enjoined upon parents by the Shastras. Lastly, he contended that the primary aim of education was to improve character, and not merely to help earn money, as argued by the orthodox section. The stand taken by Madanmohan on the enduring values of education came to be supported by almost all the progressives in the land.

An intimate friend of Vidyasagar and held in high esteem by the progressives, Madanmohan Tarkalankar passed away in Kandi on 9 March 1858.

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RAJENDRA DATTA

"Never can the Ganges have borne in its bosom to their ocean tomb the ashes of a man richer in every virtue that merits to be recorded with reverence"—this was the glowing tribute paid by Professor Fitzeward Hall, a former Principal of the Benares College, to the memory of Rajendra Datta in the 'New York Nation' of 28 August 1889.

Rajendra Datta, the great-grandson of Akrur Datta, the reputed zamindar of Bowbazar, was born to opulence in 1818. His father, Parbati Charan Datta, had him admitted to the school of David Drummond and subsequently to the Hindu College for a good English education. At the Hindu College, where he was a classmate of Ramtanu Lahiri, he came under the influence of Derozio. This influence with its rationalistic slant made him a positivist. He lost all faith in idol worship and steadily became a supporter of Brahmoism. He helped Debendranath Tagore in establishing the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* in 1839.

He also read for some time in the Calcutta Medical College and then opened a charitable allopathic dispensary at his own house with the help of Dr. Durgacharan Bandyopadhyaya. But he soon changed over to homoeopathy and made his mark in this field of treatment. It was he who converted the well-known physician, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar, into a homoeopathic practitioner.

Associated with innumerable mercantile firms and the proprietor of a few, he was immensely rich. But his riches were all well spent, directed to relieving the distress both of the ailing and the poor, to promoting the cause of education and to building up a first class library of his own.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

Like some of his compeers, he was also prompted by patriotic motives to support the cause of vernacular education espoused by the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* in 1839. Though a Derozian by training, he could not persuade himself to accept the increasing laxity in the admission of students to the Hindu College. As a mark of protest against this laxity, he helped Radhakanta Deb, Debendranath Tagore, Asutosh Deb and many others to establish the Hindu Metropolitan College, with Capt. D. L. Richardson as Principal, in his own house on 2 May 1853. Though shortlived, the College clearly reflected the

hostility of Rajendra Datta and his national-minded friends to Christian influence and laxity in the Hindu College. This did not, however, mean that patriotic Rajendra was hostile to English education in the usefulness and elevating influence of which he always firmly believed.

Rajendra Datta was a keen supporter of indigenous industry. He was one of the sponsors of the British Indian Association and later of the Indian National Congress, though he never came into the limelight of politics in Bengal. Universally known as 'Raja Babu' for his boundless generosity, he passed away on 5 June 1889.

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DWARAKANATH VIDYABHUSAN

Son of Harachandra Nyayaratna Bhattacharya, Dwarakanath was born at Changripota near Calcutta in April 1819. He studied at the Sanskrit College in Calcutta from 1832 to January 1844. He was all along a brilliant student and obtained the title of 'Vidyabhusan' at the final examination. In 1843, he was the only student to obtain from the Hindu Law Examination Committee a diploma for his unique proficiency in Smriti.

After passing out, he taught Bengali for some time in the Fort William College. Then from 16 November 1844 to 1 July 1873, the date of his retirement, he worked successively in the Sanskrit College as Librarian, as second Professor of Grammar and, in addition to his duties, as temporary Assistant to Principal Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar from May to November 1855, and, finally, as Professor of Literature.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE VERNACULAR PRESS

Though a reputed scholar, Dwarakanath is better remembered in Bengal as the champion of a free and educative vernacular Press. His *Soma Prakash*, launched with Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar's blessings on 15 November 1858, went a long way in toning up the standard of vernacular journalism in the country. As proprietor-editor of this

newspaper, he took special pains to maintain an exacting standard of truthful reporting and objective analyses of contemporary events and governmental policies. *Soma Prakash* under his sober guidance lent itself also to the propagation of progressive political and social ideas deemed beneficial to the country.

The career of *Soma Prakash* in the history of Indian journalism is very chequered. Brought out under the slowly-evanescent shadow of Canning's Press Act of 1857, *Soma Prakash* became increasingly forthright in its editorials after the seditious clause of the above Act had been dropped from the draft of the new Indian Penal Code in 1860. Like *Halisaharbarata* and the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika' of the seventies, *Soma Prakash* also gave vent to its revulsion against the oppression practised by European planters on Indian peasants. With the moderation of Canning withdrawn long ago, the Government of India, under the influence of 'Beaconsfieldism', became increasingly touchy about the criticism levelled against its policies by the vernacular Press. In 1878, Lord Lytton clamped down strict censorship on vernacular newspapers by promulgating the Vernacular Press Act, which, modelled on the Irish Coercion Act of 1870, empowered the Government to take action against any vernacular paper without going to courts of law. Dwarakanath soon got into trouble when the Government demanded from him an explanation for the publication, in his *Soma Prakash* of 17 March 1879, of his Lahore correspondent's letter, which, apart from criticizing Lytton's Afghan policy, regretted the backward state of education in the Punjab. The authorities treated this as an attempt to preach disaffection among the people. But the purpose of the letter, as Dwarakanath held, was to bring to the notice of the Government the wants and grievances of the people and to impress upon it the necessity of refraining from doing any more wrong. When, however, the Government asked him to enter into a bail-bond for Rs. 1,000 under Section 6 of Act IX of 1878, he observed in the *Soma Prakash* of 24 March 1879 that he could not continue its publication "with a sword drawn over its head." He thought that a trade in rice with a capital of Rs. 1,000 would be more profitable than the publication of the *Soma Prakash* under humiliating restrictions. The paper was thus closed on 31 March 1879. The *Sanjibani* of 1 April 1879 mourned "the loss of the guide and instructor of the native press". The *Bharat Mihir* of 10 April 1879 regretted: "That Lord Lytton, the son of the author of Rienzi, himself a poet, should thus have destroyed with his own

hand an important member of the newspaper press of a country, is a very sad thought."

The agitation of the Indian Association combined with the liberal policy of Lord Ripon led to the repeal of the Act, and the publication of *Soma Prakash* was resumed by Dwarkanath from 9 April 1880.

Dwarkanath, like Rammohun Roy, felt that a free Press voicing the grievances of the people could conduce to good government. To him it was one of the recognized means of preventing revolution. Needless to say, the sober but powerful voice of Dwarkanath did strengthen the agitation carried on by Surendranath Banerjea and other members of the Indian Association for the restoration of the freedom of the vernacular Press in the country. Incidentally, during this period of trial and stress for the vernacular Press Dwarkanath started a high-class monthly journal called *Kalpadrūm*, which, however, lasted only for five years from 1879 to 1884.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The study of the political and constitutional history of Europe imbued Dwarkanath's mind with liberal ideas, which he tried to popularize in the country through his journals. He held that the best form of government for India could be found in a "mixed constitution" as seen in England. It ensured the growth of democracy by making the king share power with the people. He believed that this "mixed constitution" could be a success if a truly representative legislature were introduced in India. The utter dependence of the Legislature on the Executive in India was thoroughly repugnant to his mind. The Legislative Council had been introduced because the Governor-General could not simultaneously discharge the law-making and executive functions. But, he pertinently questioned, if both were representatives of the Crown, why should one dominate the other? This domination, as seen in the Council member's inability to introduce any bill without the previous sanction of the Governor-General, was disliked by him. This apart, he cited, in support of his thesis about having a truly representative legislature with full control over taxation and expenditure, the democratic principle that there could be no taxation without representation. And to drive home his point, he pleaded that if taxes were raised and spent with the consent of the people, a close identity between the government and the governed would conduce to the stability of the former. As a matter

of fact, he saw no reason, particularly in the light of the successful working of the British Indian Association, why Britain should desist from introducing a representative and responsible government in India, as had already been done in Canada and Australia.

Because of the absence of a representative legislature in India, he proposed the raising of a public fund for sending three representatives to England to explain Indian views correctly to the British people.

Dwarakanath was an individualist in regard to the functions of government. He did not want government either to interfere in commerce or to undertake the construction of railways and irrigation works. These should be left to private enterprise, preferably to joint-stock companies. On the other hand, he deplored the over-dependence of his countrymen on governmental effort in every matter that concerned them. This invariably bred indolence and tended to check individual initiative. In the matter of social reform, however, he wanted government to act with the consent of the people. When the people could not be induced by peaceful means to give up iniquitous customs like hook-swinging, the sale of brides and polygamy, the government should try to eradicate them by force of law. But he preferred to seek the remedy of any social evil in popular education rather than in legislative activity. For he feared that once government interference was tolerated, it might continue to operate in such a way as to deprive the people of all control over their own social life.

His progressive views covered many other problems as well. He wanted the extension of the jury system on the ground that a case decided by many was bound to be better than the judgement of a single judge. He also desired the abolition of capital punishment. He felt that the ends of justice could be better promoted, not by hanging a criminal, but by employing him in such a way (e.g. in agricultural pursuits) as to make him useful to society.

PROMOTER OF MASS EDUCATION

Dwarakanath always advocated that money should be spent on mass education, not merely on the sons of the landed aristocracy. He held that if the Government took the trouble of educating the middle and poorer classes, the richer classes would educate themselves out of a sense of shame. That apart, physical education must also be imparted to students alongside literary education. He firmly believed

in the age-old proverb that without a sound mind in a sound body no young man could make himself a useful citizen.

Dwarakanath believed that through self-help and the spread of education alone the people could be made to raise themselves by their bootstraps from their abject condition of degradation. In and around his own village he set an example of self-help and individual initiative by setting up a school, by building roads, by effecting the establishment of a railway station and a post office, and, lastly, by helping the establishment of a municipality at Rajpur. Thus by his word and deed he inspired his countrymen and went all out to develop a feeling of nationality without which no society could ever hope to shake off its political shackles. Dwarakanath died in Jabbalpur on 23 August 1886.

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AKSHAY KUMAR DATTA

Son of Pitambar Datta, Akshay Kumar Datta was born on 15 July 1820 at Chupi in the district of Burdwan. After receiving his preliminary education at the village pathsala, he entered the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta, of which Mr. Jeffroy was the headmaster. But on account of his father's death he had to abandon his studies and look for means to earn his livelihood.

On 25 December 1839, he became a member of the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* on the recommendation of Iswar Chandra Gupta. Shortly afterwards, he was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Sabha. He held this position till February 1847. That apart, he held the post of teacher of Geography and Natural Philosophy at the *Tattwabodhini Pathsala* from June 1840 to April 1843. Subsequently, he edited the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* from 1843 to 1855. The high quality and tone of the journal under his editorship charmed even a fastidious man like Ramgopal Ghosh.

He had to give up this editorship when, in July 1855, he was

appointed Headmaster of the Normal School in Calcutta on the recommendation of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. But, unfortunately, he had to relinquish this post on account of illness. The rest of his life was spent in writing books, which earned him the reputation of being "one of the very few of the best Bengali writers of the time".

Together with Debendranath Tagore and others, he was ceremonially initiated into the fold of Brahmoism on 21 December 1843. It was he who, by his logical arguments, persuaded Debendranath Tagore to abandon his belief in the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas in 1850.

PROMOTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

Two patriotic motives led to the establishment of the *Tattwabodhini Pathsala*, after the pattern of the Hindu College Pathsala, on 13 June 1840: one, to counteract the influence of the Christian missionaries over young and impressionable minds; the other, to make them love their culture and language. Akshay Kumar's own love for the culture of India was clearly reflected in his book, *Bharatbarsiya Upasak-Sampradaya* (2 vols.). However, he wholeheartedly co-operated with Debendranath Tagore in preparing textbooks in Bengali for the students of the Pathsala. Much valuable information on the Vedas was included in some of these textbooks. The vernacular bias given to the prescribed course of study at the Pathsala had its root in a feeling of nationality. This feeling was effectively expressed by Akshay Kumar in his inaugural speech at Bansberia, where the Pathsala was shifted and formally opened on 30 April 1843. He pointed out that unless students were given instruction in their own language and religion, the language of the English was bound to become the language of this land and their religion would become the religion of the Indians. The Pathsala was thus designed to teach boys both science and the Shastras in the Bengali language. But, unfortunately, this institution had to be closed down in 1848 for want of funds.

The failure of the Pathsala did not dishearten Akshay Kumar. As editor of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, he continued to work as a national-minded teacher for the people in general, untiringly disseminating the knowledge of Indian culture, of science, of geography, of natural philosophy and many things else. In the words of Romesh Chunder Dutt, "all that could enlighten the expanding intellect of Bengal and dispel darkness and ignorance found a convenient vehicle

in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*” under the editorship of Akshay Kumar. To dispel ignorance, he wanted education to be made compulsory for all children up to the age of fifteen. To him, the spread of enlightenment in society depended to a great extent on the progress of female education.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Akshay Kumar was “an apostle and a teacher of the party of progress and reform in Bengal”. His enthusiasm for social reform and regeneration was matched by that of Vidyasagar. As Secretary to the *Atmiya Sabha* formed at the residence of Debendranath Tagore in 1852 and as Joint Secretary to the *Subrid Samiti* established at the residence of Kissorsy Chand Mitra on 15 December 1854, he succeeded in infusing his burning zeal into his friends and collaborators for combating the crying evils of society. The columns of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* were also effectively used by him to propagate his ideas on social reform. Together with Vidyasagar, he pleaded for widow remarriage and condemned the customs of child marriage and polygamy. His writings in condemnation of the habit of drinking made many give it up.

His moral instructions changed the course of life of many people. Quite unlike Debendranath Tagore who sought to know man's relationship with God, Akshay Kumar was always an earthy teacher, who tried to show, in the interest of social regeneration, what should be the ideal relationship between man and man, between man and woman, between parents and children, between master and servant, etc. His work, *Bajhyabastu*, showed his countrymen the most rational approach to the problem of social regeneration.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

His political writings were no less inspiring to his countrymen. He always pleaded with the Government for the cause of the helpless ryots through the columns of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*. An opponent of the idea of European colonization of the land, he not unoften condemned the Government for its failure to protect the life and property of the humble ryots against the lawlessness of the indigo planters.

For recovering the lost glory of their motherland, he exhorted his countrymen to give up their habit of dependence and to practise self-help in all matters.

An earnest reformer, dedicated to the cause of the political, social and moral regeneration of the country, Akshay Kumar Datta passed away on 28 May 1886.

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ISVAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

"I have crossed drains and ditches, pools and tanks, and at last I am come to the sagar (sea)"—this was how Sri Ramakrishna expressed his satisfied curiosity about Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, when he once called upon the latter and stood face to face with him, fortified in his belief that divine love and grace alone could make a man so great.

An outsized diamond in a trumpery world, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar was born in a family of Sanskrit pandits at Birsingha in Midnapore on 26 September 1820. The poverty of his father, Thakurdas Bandyopadhyaya, stimulated, instead of stifling, his native genius to blossom into that of a prodigy of learning. The early promise shown by him at the village pathsala induced his father to bring him to Calcutta in 1829 for better education. Admitted to the Sanskrit College on 1 June 1829, he soon made his mark as a brilliant student, sweeping in his stride the highest honours in every class examination. He passed out from the College in December 1841. The title of 'Vidyasagar' was used for the first time in the Certificate awarded to him by the Law Committee, in May 1839, on his passing the Smriti (Law) Examination.

He began his service career as Head Pandit of the Fort William College in 1841. In 1846, he was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College, but he resigned it in 1849 over some differences with Rasamay Datta, Secretary to the College, and returned to the Fort William College as Head Writer and Treasurer. In December 1850, however, he came back to the Sanskrit College as Professor of Sanskrit Literature. On 22 January the following year, he rose to be

its first Principal as a result of the abolition of the posts of Secretary and Assistant Secretary, consequent upon the resignation of Rasamay Datta, who felt mortified at the manner in which Dr. Mouat, Secretary to the Council of Education, requested the young Professor of Literature to draw up a plan of reform regarding the course of Sanskrit study in December 1850. Later, in consequence of Sir Charles Wood's Educational Despatch of 1854 and his own Report on the mode of instruction in Government-aided English and Vernacular Schools, he was appointed, in 1855, Special Inspector of Schools for Hooghly, Burdwan, Midnapore and Nadia, in addition to his duties as Principal of the Sanskrit College. But he relinquished his offices in November 1858, first, because of the Government's disinclination to promote him to the vacant Inspectorship of South Bengal, and, in the second place, because of the hauteur and obstructive policy of Mr. W. C. Young of the Covenanted Civil Service, the first Director of Public Instruction. Subsequently, his Sanskrit Press and Sanskrit Press Depository, where his books were kept for sale, became his sources of income. Though not in public service any longer, he was occasionally consulted by the Government on their intended legislation concerning Hindu Law. For him retirement from the public service did not, however, mean retirement from the public life of the country, of which he continued to be the most inspiring figure for a long time.

A MODEL OF SELF-RESPECT

With inimitable courage and rare disinterestedness he admirably combined a very high sense of self-respect, which he never compromised for any consideration. The way he always reacted to the haughtiness and superiority-complex of European officials proved to be a source of inspiration to his countrymen. Once when Mr. Karr, Principal of the Hindu College, received Vidyasagar in his office with his legs upon his table, the latter retaliated within a few days by receiving this European educationist in his room in the Sanskrit College in the same manner. When, on the complaint of Karr, he was asked to explain his improper conduct by Dr. Mouat, he wrote: "I learned the manners, of which Mr. Karr complains, from the gentleman himself a few days ago, when I had an occasion to call on him. My notions of refined manners being thus formed from the conduct of an enlightened, civilised European, I behaved myself as respectfully towards him, as he had himself done. I do not think that, in this

manner, I am to blame in the least." This demonstration of a keen sense of self-respect and manliness impressed Dr. Mouat so much that he had Mr. Karr meet Vidyasagar and settle the matter amicably with him.

It was this identical sense of self-respect that never allowed him to yield to the domination or intimidation of the Civilian D.P.I., Mr. Young, who took a Mephistophelean delight in hamstringing his efforts to proceed with the scheme of opening new girls' schools in the districts. Constant frictions created such an unbearable situation that Vidyasagar threw up in disgust the 500-rupee offices, foregoing thereby his pension. To a flabbergasted friend he said, "Nothing is more valuable in this world than self-respect."

There was, indeed, a touch of patriotism in his keen sense of self-respect. This was eloquently expressed by the pride he took in wearing *dhuti*, *chaddar* and Taltola slippers even while visiting high European dignitaries, or the Durbar, or the districts on official tour. No official custom or order could make him discard his native costume or footwear. In the Durbar of 1858, where he was invited to read the Royal Proclamation in Bengali, he was first refused admission by the overzealous *durwans* on account of his slippers. Sir Cecil Beadon's timely intervention, however, saved the situation. His slippers again caused him trouble when, on 28 January 1874, he visited the Library of the Asiatic Society with two friends, whose desire was to see the Museum (in those days the Museum and the Library of the Society were housed in the same building). While the latter, being shod in Western shoes, were permitted to enter the building, Vidyasagar was asked by the *durwan* to take off his slippers and carry them in his hands before entering. He left the place in high dudgeon and wrote a strong letter of protest to the authorities condemning the discriminatory treatment based upon the use of footwear. 'The Hindoo Patriot' of 26 July 1874 and the 'Englishman' severely criticized the maintenance of such an insulting custom in a public institution and pleaded for its early abolition.

Incidentally, when, in 1861, Rajnarayan Basu issued a 'Prospectus for the establishment of a Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal', with its emphasis on the use of *dhuti*, *chaddar* and Indian food instead of hats, coats and European food, he might have had before him the shining example of Vidyasagar.

• PROMOTER OF MENTAL AWAKENING

To the spread of education, deemed the surest means of dispelling ignorance, Vidyasagar applied himself assiduously right from the beginning of his service career. He came into the limelight in the field of education by helping—in cooperation with Mr. G. T. Marshall, Secretary of the Fort William College—to select proper teachers for the 'Hardinge Schools' in Bengal between 1844 and 1846.

As Special Inspector, he was instrumental in the establishment of a number of model schools in the mofussil from 1855. At his suggestion the Government opened a Normal School in the premises of the Sanskrit College to train up teachers for these schools. Akshay Kumar Datta was its first Headmaster. He was succeeded within a short time by Ram Kamal Bhattacharya.

It was almost with a crusader's zeal that he tried to promote education in the country. Wherever he went in course of his inspection tours he exhorted the rich zamindars to open schools on their own in their localities. Those who did could depend upon his unfailing advice and guidance. In his own village he opened free schools, one for boys and another for girls. To the former he attached a night school for the education of the cultivators' son. He himself bore the expenses of the whole enterprise.

The spirit of dedication in which he pursued the cause of education was best manifested in his selfless service to the Hindu Metropolitan Institution, which originated, in 1859, in Sankar Ghosh Lane as the Calcutta Training School. Designed to impart English education to the middle-class Hindu youths at tuition fees much less than those of Government institutions, as well as to keep them away from the influence of the Gospel tendentiously taught in the inexpensive missionary schools, the Calcutta Training School was fortunate to get its guiding genius in Vidyasagar from 1861. He had its name changed to Hindu Metropolitan Institution in 1864, and later through his unremitting efforts it steadily rose to the rank of a first grade college, with brilliant results to its credit, under the Calcutta University in 1879. Law and Honours courses were opened in 1882 and 1885 respectively. The patriotism and selfless devotion of Vidyasagar and his coadjutors, like Raja Pratap Chandra Singha, Ramanath Tagore, Hiralal Seal and Ramgopal Ghosh, showed to European educationists and administrators what Indian enterprise, inspired by honest motives, was capable of achieving in the field of English education.

Like many of his progressive compatriots, Vidyasagar seriously addressed himself to promoting the cause of female education in the country. None realized better than he the hopelessness of the cause of female emancipation as long as women remained uneducated in society. Ignorant women were a drag on society, and their ignorance alone had helped the perpetuation of their miserable existence over the ages. He, thus, wholeheartedly collaborated with Drinkwater Bethune in establishing the Hindu Female School (subsequently called the Bethune Female School) on 7 May 1849. He remained its Honorary Secretary up to 1869. The success of this enterprise was ensured by the cooperation of well-known men like Radhakanta Deb, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, Debendranath Tagore, Ramgopal Ghosh and many others.

To attract the attention of his countrymen to the need of educating their daughters, Vidyasagar had a Sanskrit passage from the Shastras displayed prominently on the carriage carrying girls to and from the School. The meaning of the passage is that daughters, like sons, should be carefully brought up and trained. Its display was meant to drive home to all parents the basic fact that the education of females was not interdicted by the Shastras, but rather was an obligatory duty on their part.

Female schools were also opened by him in the districts in his charge as Special Inspector. But W. G. Young, the D.P.I., in his ill-inspired zeal for curtailing the expenditure on plans to spread education, refused point-blank to pass the bills for the newly-established girls' schools. Vidyasagar had, thus, perforce to foot them all from his own pocket. To the funds subsequently raised for their maintenance voluntary contributions came from many well-disposed gentlemen, including C. Beadon and H. Raban. However, the wet blanket thrown by Young on Vidyasagar's enthusiasm for establishing model female schools ultimately turned out to be one of the causes of the latter's resignation from Government service.

Though there was no abatement in his zeal for female education even after his resignation from Government service, he could not, however, persuade himself to support the idea of establishing a Female Normal School for training female teachers for female schools. The idea was actually sponsored by Miss Mary Carpenter, Keshab Chandra Sen, Manomohan Ghosh and Dwijendra Nath Tagore. Vidyasagar deprecated the idea, because, in the light of the inveterate Hindu prejudice against female education, it was difficult to get even girls

of ten years of age for the Bethune School. He, however, suggested that the Government could give grants-in-aid to individuals who would undertake the responsibility of training female teachers. He counselled caution in this matter, for otherwise excessive forwardness might irreparably damage all that had been achieved in the sphere of female education. Kristo Das Pal was also of the same opinion.

But the Government brushed aside the opinion of Vidyasagar and, on the basis of Seton-Karr Committee's Report, opened a Female Normal School at the Bethune School. It functioned with five or six pupils until it was closed after a year and a half by Sir George Campbell.

Anything likely to stir up Hindu indignation and thereby retard the progress of female education was resented by Vidyasagar. He had Miss Pigott, the Lady Superintendent of the Bethune School, dismissed in 1868 because of her practice of making the students sing Christian hymns.

Though he resigned his secretaryship of the Bethune School in 1869, he continued to take as keen an interest as before in the educational progress of the girl students. When Chandramukhi Basu, the daughter of Ramchandra Basu and for a long time the Headmistress of the Bethune School, became the first Bengali lady to obtain the M.A. degree of the Calcutta University, Vidyasagar was so delighted that he presented her with a copy of Cassel's Illustrated Shakespeare.

After joining the Fort William College as Head Pandit, Vidyasagar realized that a knowledge of English was essential for the progress of Indians. He himself started learning English seriously from Durga Charan Bandyopadhyaya and Rajnarayan Basu. Later, his belief in the usefulness of the English language induced him to introduce its study in the curriculum of the Sanskrit College, in spite of the adverse criticism levelled at it by the European Principal of the Benares Sanskrit College in 1853. He held that students would be able to write Bengali well if they had a good command over both Sanskrit and English.

Vidyasagar's liberal mind, which made room for the study of English in the curriculum of the Sanskrit College, could not tolerate the continuance of the caste restrictions on the admission of non-Brahmin students to the institution. His Report of 20 March 1851 to the Council of Education ultimately led to the admission of *Kayasthas* and *Sudras* to the College. The opposition of the Brahmin

professors was broken by his castigation that they did not hesitate to teach the "godly language" to Europeans for the sake of lucre.

PROMOTER OF THE BENGALI LANGUAGE

There is no mistaking his innate love for his mother tongue when he chose to dedicate himself to its cultivation rather than to that of Sanskrit in which his knowledge and scholarship was profound. His writings in Bengali reflect a fluent and elegant style, marked by sweetness of language and perspicuity of expression. This style was a definite improvement upon the earlier turgid prose of Rammohun Roy. It gave elasticity to the Bengali language and helped it to come out of the groove of the past. Rabindranath Tagore rightly hailed Vidyasagar as the first writer to introduce proper punctuation in Bengali prose. This newness was a sign of the renascence in Bengal. By writing with equal facility for both elders and children he made his educated countrymen aware of the potentialities of the Bengali language. His style in *Sitar Banabas*, *Betala Panchavingsati* and *Sakuntala* were for a long time looked upon as a model for Bengali prose. His *Barna-parichaya*, *Bodhodaya* and *Kathamala* are still as useful to children, engaged in learning Bengali, as before.

In fact, every means was used by him to promote the Bengali language and its literature. As his Report of 16 December 1850 shows, he wanted the Sanskrit College to be not merely a seat of Sanskrit learning but also "a nursery of improved vernacular literature." His association with the 'Paper-Committee', which examined and approved articles and books intended for publication by the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*, served the same purpose.

CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL REGENERATION

Side by side with spreading education, which was undoubtedly the best means of reintegrating society on enduring values of life, Vidyasagar strove hard to redeem the Hindu widows from a life of condemnation by getting the obsolete and irrational restrictions on their remarriage removed. Their miserable existence was a standing reproach to Hindu society.

He wrote two pamphlets with the help of a sloka of *Parasar Sambhita*, which sanctioned widow remarriage in the *Kali Yuga*, and fruitlessly participated in two debates at the residence of Radhakanta Deb to convince his orthodox opponents about the canonicalness of the cause he had espoused. But his move created a strong counter-

agitation, led by well-known pandits and supported by the *Jessore Hindu Dharma Rakshini Sabha* and the *Calcutta Dharma Sabha*. Only a small section of the English-educated Hindus, including Maharajadhiraj Mahtab Chand Bahadur of Burdwan, rallied round the banner of Vidyasagar, who was also able to convince the British rulers of the reasonableness of the cause by his English pamphlet, 'Marriage of Hindu Widows'.

Vidyasagar's petition of 4 October 1855 to the Legislative Council was followed by counter-petitions. Excitement mounted with the introduction of a draft Bill on widow remarriage by J. P. Grant. It was passed on 19 July 1856 in the teeth of vehement orthodox opposition in the country. On 26 July, with the assent of the Governor-General, the draft Bill became Act XV of 1856. It recognized as legal both the remarriage of a widow and her issues by such marriage, declaring at the same time that the rights of a widow to her deceased husband's property would cease on her remarriage. Unlike the anti-*Sati* Regulation of 1829, which was a compulsory law, Act XV of 1856 was merely a permissive law which would have effect only when those for whose benefit it was intended chose to avail themselves of it.

In practice, the Act proved to be a dead letter, for it failed to remove the ingrained prejudice of the Hindus against the remarriage of widows. Nothing could mitigate their abhorrence for it. However, 7 December 1856 proved to be a red-letter day not only in the eventful life of Vidyasagar but also in the history of the Act. On that day he had Sris Chandra Vidyaratna, son of Pandit Ramdhan Tarkavagish of Khantura, married to the widow, Kalimati Devi. The marriage took place under police protection in the house of Raj Krishna Banerjee at Sukea Street. Unfortunately, many quondam enthusiasts embittered the mind of Vidyasagar by absenteeing themselves from the ceremony out of sheer fear of physical assault and social criticism. This did not daunt Vidyasagar, who bore all the expenses of the bride's nuptial dress and ornaments. In 1870, his own son, Narayan Chandra, fortified his labour for the great cause by marrying a widow.

Simultaneously with the widow remarriage movement, Vidyasagar set on foot another agitation for the abolition of polygamy among the Hindus, particularly among the Kulin Brahmins of Bengal. On his first petition of 27 December 1855, signed by 25,000 persons, including Maharajadhiraj Mahtab Chandra Bahadur of

Burdwan, no action could be taken by the Legislative Council owing to the outbreak of the Mutiny. The Mutiny over, the agitation was resumed by Vidyasagar. Another petition was sent on 1 February 1866. Many leading personalities supported it. An application was made under Section 43 of the Indian Councils Act for permission to introduce into the Bengal Council a Bill for the abolition of polygamy. But the Government, still licking its wounds inflicted by the Mutiny, was afraid to introduce any such legislation straightway. Dilatory tactics were adopted. The matter was referred to a Committee of which Vidyasagar was also a member. Its Report was submitted in February 1867. The majority condemned it, but could not recommend even the passing of a declaratory legislation, setting forth the law on the subject and making any infraction of it penal. Vidyasagar, however, held that a declaratory law might be passed without interfering with the liberty which Hindus had in the matter of marriage. Unfortunately, the whole movement foundered on the Secretary of State's express objection to the promulgation of any such legislation. The Government's view was that a legislation might be undertaken only when the majority of the people would condemn the practice under the enlightening influence of education.

All this could not damp the ardour of Vidyasagar for the cause. In 1871, he issued a pamphlet on polygamy and urged his countrymen to petition the Government for its abolition, because it was not in accord with the injunctions of Manu. In March 1872, he issued another pamphlet severely condemning the supporters of polygamy. The movement failed ultimately, but not without awakening his countrymen to the enormity of polygamy.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

One of the founders of the Hindu Family Annuity Fund, a staunch supporter of the Bengal Temperance Society and a promoter of informed journalism as proven by his unflagging interest in the 'Hindoo Patriot' and the *Soma Prakash*, Vidyasagar's unbounded enthusiasm for the regeneration of his countrymen would have led him to take an active part in politics also if he were in good health. Surendranath Banerjea informs us that, in 1875, Vidyasagar and Justice Dwarkanath Mitra had conceived the idea of forming a political organization for the middle classes of Bengal. It was to be called the Bengal Association after the British Indian Association, a purely landholders' body. Kristo Das Pal warmly commended the

idea. But it could not be given concrete form for want of popular support. Surendranath Banerjea, Ananda Mohan Basu, Shishir Kumar Ghosh, Manomohan Ghosh and Sivanath Sastri did not like the name, which obviously circumscribed the proposed body's scope of work. They decided to launch it under the name of 'The Indian Association'. Vidyasagar, in spite of the request of Sivanath Sastri and Ananda Mohan Basu, declined, because of his poor health, the presidentship of the Association on the eve of its establishment on 26 July 1876. But none probably felt happier than he at the realization of his most cherished ideas.

A philanthropist, a fearless social reformer, an educationist of the highest calibre, and, above all, a humanist who admirably combined his profound scholarship with humility, Vidyasagar is a legendary figure in the history of nascent Bengal. His life and deeds are still a never-failing source of inspiration both to the young and the old of Bengal. Such a man who can leave his mark indelibly on the Indian mind without the help of a Boswell is, indeed, great by any standard. This great man, who had, in the words of Michael Madhusudan Dutt, "the genius and wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman and the heart of a Bengali mother," passed away from the field of his activities on 29 July 1891.

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SAMBHUNATH PANDIT

A progressive, Sambhunath Pandit, son of Sadasiv Pandit, was a shining example of grit, honesty and self-help. Born in Calcutta in 1820, he was actually brought up by his uncle, who encouraged him to learn Urdu and Persian in Lucknow. At the age of 14 he returned

to Calcutta and entered the Oriental Seminary. But he left school in 1841 and became an assistant to the Record Keeper of the Sadar Diwani Court on Rs. 20/- per month. While translating Persian and Bengali documents, he acquired so much knowledge of law that, in 1845, he was appointed a *Decreejari Mohurir* under Sir Robert Barlow. His work on 'The Law relating to the execution of Decrees' excited the admiration of members of the Court.

In November 1848, he passed the Pleadership Examination and became within a short time a distinguished criminal lawyer. In March 1853, the Government appointed him a Junior Government Pleader. In 1855, he was appointed by Government to the 'Chair of Regulation Law' in the Presidency College on Rs. 400/- a month. He held this position for nearly two years. In 1861, he became the Senior Government Pleader as a result of the illness of Ramaprasad Roy, and shortly after that he was raised to the Bench of the High Court. As the first Indian Judge, he lived up to his reputation of being just and impartial and actively cooperated with the Chief Justice in settling the important law relating to the resumption of Lakhiraj lands. His works on the Regulation Law and his contribution on legal terms to Pearson's 'Bakyavali' added to his reputation.

A PROGRESSIVE

Sambhunath identified himself completely with the aims and ideals of the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*. Realizing that the spread of knowledge in the vernacular was necessary for social progress, he voluntarily came forward as a Brahmo to support the activities of the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*. His belief in the unity of the Godhead was clearly expressed in his pamphlet entitled 'On the Being of God'. As President of the Bhowanipore *Brahmo Samaj*, he tried his best to propagate the ideals of the progressive Brahmos.

He was a staunch advocate of female education, and was the first to send his daughter to the Bethune School in 1849. Till the last day of his life he took an unflinching interest in its welfare.

Though he found very little time to play an active part in the political affairs of the country, yet he gave in his adhesion to the cause of the British Indian Association when it was founded on 31 October 1851. He was one of its founder-members.

A man of charitable disposition, always ready with his purse to help any deserving individual or institution, Sambhunath Pandit passed away very early in life on 6 June 1867.

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RAJENDRALAL MITRA

An eminent Orientalist as well as a linguist of repute, Rajendralal Mitra was born in Calcutta on 16 February 1822. His father, Janamejaya Mitra, was a well-known scholar of Persian and Sanskrit.

Restless in spirit, young Rajendralal, after passing out from Govindachandra Basak's Hindu Free School, entered the Medical College in December 1837. But, in spite of his diligence and proven aptitude for medical studies, he left Medical College in May 1841 as a result of a quarrel that he had with some Europeans. He then rolled on from a brief study of law to linguistics, in which he ultimately discovered his real interest. His proficiency in Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu led to his appointment as Librarian and Assistant Secretary in the Asiatic Society of Bengal in November 1846. Though he resigned this post in February 1856, his craving for knowledge was satisfied here. He enriched the *Journal of the Asiatic Society* by his research papers. His appointment as Director of the Ward's Institution in March 1856, a post from which he retired in 1880, did not lead to any severance of his intimate and fruitful connection with the Asiatic Society. He continued to serve this learned Society until 1891 either as Secretary, or as Vice-President, or as President. He was the first Indian to be the President of the Society in 1885. He was also an Honorary Member of many learned Societies of the West, including the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Wherever in the West Oriental learning was seriously cultivated, his name was held in high esteem. Even Max Müller respected him as a great scholar and critic, who overshadowed European Orientalists of his time by his remarkable achievements in the field of Oriental research. For his profound scholarship the Calcutta University conferred upon him the LL.D. degree (*honoris causa*), and the Government, such honours as Rai Bahadur, C.I.E and Raja.

A Justice of the Peace, a member of the Calcutta Municipality and a very important personality of the British Indian Association, he took a keen interest in the cause of his countrymen's welfare and progress.

PROMOTER OF THE VERNACULAR

Rajendralal was very patriotic in his support of all efforts to promote the improvement of the Bengali language. As a member of the 'Paper Committee' together with Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Rajnarayan Basu and others, he helped the selection of useful and instructive articles for publication in the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*. He was also intimately associated with the Vernacular Literature Society of 1851, the primary purpose of which was to spread knowledge and promote the vernacular literature by publishing Bengali translations of English works. Among his able coadjutors in this work were Vidyasagar, Radhakanta Deb, Hodgson Pratt, W. S. Seton-Karr, the Rev. James Long and many others.

It was with the help of this Society that the *Bibidbarta Sangraha*, a pictorial monthly, was brought out in 1851 under the editorship of Rajendralal. Though irregularly published, this monthly, with its articles on history, literature, philosophy, science and book reviews admirably succeeded in disseminating knowledge of many things in Bengal. Even Rabindranath Tagore profitably read this magazine while in his teens. Rajendralal also edited for six years the *Rahasya Sandharv*, another pictorial magazine, which was brought out in February 1863 under the joint auspices of the Vernacular Literature Society and the Calcutta School Book Society to spread knowledge of useful things in Bengali. All this apart, as a writer of useful books in Bengali, Rajendralal played a prominent role in the *Saraswat Samaj* (the Society of learned men), which was brought into being in 1882 mainly on the initiative of Jyotirindranath Tagore to promote and enrich the vernacular language. As President, Rajendralal was its livewire, in spite of the fact that it had such prominent members as Vidyasagar and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. For the improvement of the Bengali language he advocated not merely the introduction of a simple form of spelling but also the use of appropriate words and terms for those in English.

But his zeal for spreading knowledge in the vernacular could not induce him to support the cause of vernacular as the only medium of education in the country, as was done in the North Western

Provinces. The vernacular system in the North-West was a failure. At the 16th Annual General Meeting of the British Indian Association held on 27 February 1868, he made it clear that he stood for education which helped to make Indian civilization as materially "progressive as that of Englishmen", which enabled Indians to rise above their customs and prejudices and which conduced to rending asunder the bonds of ignorance and priestcraft. He believed that true patriots could not be denationalized by English education. This was proved beyond doubt by the example set by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. The usefulness of imparting higher education in English was testified to by the achievements of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Rangalal Bandyopadhyaya who, as he argued, were able to enrich the Bengali language and its literature because their education included the whole course of English literature. He felt that if more funds were available the study of English at the higher levels could be promoted side by side with the systematic endeavour to bring the rudiments of knowledge in vernacular within the reach of the poorest classes. If vernaculars, some of which were very poor, were made the media of instruction all over the country, that would, as he regretted in his speech of 2 July 1870, serve "only to divide and disunite" Indians. To him, true patriotism was not blind adherence to ancient customs, but an intelligent love for the welfare of Indians. So there should not be any hesitation to import anything which was calculated to raise India in the scale of nations. Those who could not go in for English education should be provided with vernacular education. "Vernaculars must for them be the media of education".

He also set his foot down on the proposal that Government should retire from active participation in the work of advancing higher education. His argument was that Indians, divided as they were by differences of community, religion and sect, as well as by mutual jealousy, were not fit for the whole responsibility. His evidence submitted to the Education Commission of 1882 showed how practical were his views on the problem of spreading education in the country.

To open up new avenues of employment for the country's youths, he cooperated with Hodgson Pratt in establishing an Art School in August 1854. Rajendralal, as its Secretary, tried to encourage students to take seriously to drawing, painting, sculpture and crafts as their means of livelihood.

Rajendralal was a great admirer of Harish Chandra Mukherjee, who had sacrificed his all for the cause of the indigo ryots. He always wanted his countrymen to follow the high ideals of this noble and brave-hearted patriot. Thus, in his speech delivered at the inauguration of the Harish Chandra Library, on 15 July 1876, in the building of the British Indian Association, he declared that the library should be a political one calculated to train up his countrymen in the same field in which Harish Chandra achieved his eminence. It was to be a training school for future Harish Chandras. It should, thus, keep every book and pamphlet having a bearing on the social and political economy of the country.

VISION OF UNITY

The spectacle of Indian disunity distressed him very much. In his speech at the 25th Annual Meeting of the British Indian Association held on 12 May 1877, he exhorted all to work for the unity of India by subordinating self to the interests of the community. He regretted in this speech that the want of unity, which had deprived the people of India of their independence some 900 years ago, was as big an obstacle in the way of their success as the lack of honesty of purpose. The removal of these two drawbacks was, therefore, a necessity on their part if they desired to raise India in the estimation of other nations in the world.

His vision of Indian unity was more purposively spelt out in the speech he delivered as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress while it met for its Calcutta session in December 1886. It had all along been the dream of his life, said he, that the scattered units of his countrymen might some day coalesce and come together. It pained him to see them living merely as individuals. He thus wanted them to combine so as to live as a nation. He saw in the meeting of the Congress the commencement of such a coalescence and "the dawn of a better and happier day for India". His vision of Indian unity bridged the gulf of difference between the Hindus and Muslims. He wanted his countrymen to remember that whatever was beneficial to the Hindus was equally beneficial to the Muslims and whatever was injurious to the Hindus was equally injurious to the Muslims. This was an appeal for the creation of a brotherly tie between the Hindus and Muslims of India, for he was aware that if they did not combine the unity of India would remain an *ignis fatuus*.

DEMAND FOR COUNCIL REFORM

Though a moderate advocating the adoption of constitutional means in the struggle for achieving national rights, he openly demanded, at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1886, reform of the Legislative Councils, where Indian members nominated by the Government represented none but themselves and their own interests. Worse still, they were overwhelmed by the dead weight of the official majority in the Councils. The remedy of this situation lay in their election, and not in Government nomination. As elected representatives, they could, he felt, become effective spokesmen of the people in the Legislative Councils. And to enable them to function effectively, the Government ought to concede them the right of interpellation.

Pre-eminently an Orientalist, Rajendralal was also well known for his great grasp of public questions. His opposition to the Bengal Tenancy Bill of 1883, in behalf of the zamindars, detracts little from his merit as a public figure. A good speaker and an effective writer, he was always held in high esteem by his educated and politically-conscious countrymen. Rabindranath Tagore, while young, frequently visited his Maniktala house just to listen to his learned conversation. This great man passed away on 26 July 1891.

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KISSORY CHAND MITRA

Son of Ramnarayan Mitra and the younger brother of Peary Chand Mitra, Kissory Chand Mitra was born on 22 May 1822 in Calcutta. Educated at Mr. Hare's School and the Hindu College, he was a meritorious student well known for his mastery over the English language. He belonged to the 'Young Bengal' group. He left College in 1842 and then successively worked as an honorary teacher in Duff's School, as a clerk in the office of the Legal

Remembrancer and as Assistant Secretary to the Asiatic Society (1844) before entering the Subordinate Executive Service in 1846 as Deputy Magistrate. The recommendation for his appointment came from Sir Frederick Halliday, who, it is said, was very much impressed by his article on Raja Rammohun Roy published in the 'Calcutta Review' in 1845.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Kissory Chand was a stalwart of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge. In 1843, he founded the Hindu Theophilanthropic Society. Its main purpose was to effect the eradication of superstition through the spread of knowledge. This Society was also used as a forum for political discussions. In his introductory discourse at a meeting of the Society, he declared: "I am firmly persuaded that one of the best means for regenerating and elevating India is to do her political justice—to free her from the political disabilities under which she labours—to render the path of political distinction accessible to her children... to give them a share in the administration of their country by levelling that distinction of covenanted and uncovenanted service which a blind self-interest has upreared—by annihilating the 'aristocracy of skin' and recognising merit and not complexion as worthy of reward".

Kissory Chand was a great admirer of George Thompson, M. P., who came to Calcutta in 1843. As a member of the Bengal British India Society and subsequently of the British Indian Association, he tirelessly advocated the cause of the larger admission of Indians into Government services.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

In his eagerness to promote the mental regeneration of his countrymen, he persuaded many zamindars and rich men in the mofussil to set up schools. He deemed it the sacred duty of the government to provide education to the people. Analyzing the importance of education in a speech delivered at the Bengal Social Science Association on 24 July, 1867, he said, "... education of the proper type would effect such a regeneration in my countrymen as will make them... willing and able instruments to work out their prosperity and happiness". He was an eager advocate of female education as well as of industrial training for young men.

ADVOCATE OF LEGAL EQUALITY

Kissory Chand had gathered as Deputy Magistrate enough experience of the administration of justice in the mofussil criminal courts. He could not tolerate the exemption of European offenders from trial in these courts. To him, this was "unconstitutional in itself, unjust in principle and often oppressive in practice". When in 1857, Sir Barnes Peacock, the Law Member, proposed the removal of this disparity in the administration of justice by a Bill, Europeans at once came together and offered a stubborn resistance. At their meeting of 14 February 1857, they described the Bill as a "Black Act". A counter-agitation was set on foot by the British Indian Association. Under its auspices a public meeting was held at the Town Hall on 6 April 1857. It was addressed, among others, by George Thompson, Kissory Chand Mitra, Rajendralal Mitra and Peary Chand Mitra. Three resolutions were adopted at the meeting. The first approved of the Bill conferring rights upon the mofussil fauzdari courts to try both Indians and Europeans; the second declared that Indian officials in responsible posts were discharging their duties efficiently; and the third approved of separating the Judiciary from the Executive. Though European pressure led to the withdrawal of the Bill, the Indian counter-agitation created a great political stir all over the country.

But he had to pay a heavy penalty for this outspokenness and participation in political agitation. British officials did not view with favour his activities. Soon the charge of being "hurried, slovenly and unbusinesslike" in meting out justice as Magistrate of Calcutta and of being partial to the natives in his judicial decisions was brought against him by Mr. Wauchope, the Commissioner of Police. The charge was investigated into by a special commission. Kissory Chand was found guilty and was dismissed from service on 28 October 1858.

Dismissed from service, he applied himself wholeheartedly to the task of educating public opinion on the political, economic and social problems of the country. As editor of the 'Indian Field', he wrote articles on 'Education in India', 'The Ryot and Zamindar', 'The Mofussil Police', which analyzed the government policy threadbare and suggested remedies. During the indigo revolt, Kissory Chand, like Harishchandra Mukherjee, took the side of the ryots against the oppressive indigo planters and gave edge to their agitation.

Kissory Chand was elected a member of the British Indian

Association in 1859. He played a prominent part in the establishment of its branches in Aligarh and elsewhere after its protest meeting of 19 July 1865 against the new system of marking adopted for the Covenanted Civil Service Examination. After explaining the objects of the Association at its fifteenth session on 16 March 1867, he rejoiced to see that the seed planted fifteen years ago had "germinated and developed into a stately tree" which had "commenced to shoot out magnificent foliage and to bear goodly fruit". He made it clear that the Association stood for self-government and represented the wants and wishes of the people.

SOCIAL REFORMER

Kissory Chand felt that legislative interference was welcome for urgent social reform. His *Subrid Samiti* (1854), which met at his residence, discussed the means of eradicating superstition, caste-ism and polygamy in the light of improving the unfortunate position of women in society.

All the leading men of the time—Debendranath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Datta, Digamber Mitra, Harishchandra Mukherjee, Peary Chand Mitra and others—put their heads together in this *Samiti* to solve these problems. They were all supporters of widow remarriage. In 1855, their *Samiti* sent a petition to the Council against polygamy. Vidyasagar found in the members of the *Subrid Samiti* a source of great strength for the social reform movement.

An ardent lover of his country, Kissory Chand Mitra passed away on 6 August 1873.

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MAHARAJA BAHADUR NARENDRA KRISHNA DEB

The seventh son of Raja Raj Krishna Deb, Narendra Krishna Deb was born in 1822. His education at the Hindu College helped him to grow into a good English scholar. He served the Government for some time as a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector. He resigned this post and devoted himself to promoting the interests of his countrymen. He was a Municipal Commissioner of Calcutta. Though the title of Maharaja Bahadur was conferred on him at the Imperial Assemblage in Delhi on 1 January 1877, he remained a staunch advocate of the interests of his countrymen till the last day of his life.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

First as President and later as Vice-President of the British Indian Association, Narendra Krishna gave an impetus to the political urge of his countrymen by his courageous espousal of their cause against the Government.

Sir George Campbell's policy to promote primary education at the cost of higher education in Bengal caused so much alarm and discontent among the educated Bengalees that a public meeting under the auspices of the British Indian Association was held in Calcutta on 2 July 1870 to protest against it. This meeting, attended by representatives from the districts of Bengal, was presided over by Ramanath Tagore. Among its speakers were Narendra Krishna, Rajendralal Mitra, Chandranath Basu, Jay Krishna Mookerjee and Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar. With time this agitation assumed greater proportions and ultimately forced the Government to revise its policy.

Together with Kristo Das Pal, Narendra Krishna also sympathized with the political aspirations of the Indian Association, which was established on 26 July 1876 as the mouthpiece of the middle classes in India. As a matter of fact, he offered every possible encouragement to the sponsors of the Indian Association and voluntarily attended its inaugural meeting.

Narendra Krishna also played a prominent role, together with Surendranath Banerjea, in organizing opposition to the revised Civil Service Regulations of February 1876, which reduced the maximum age of intending candidates from 21 to 19. This was done deliberately to prevent Indians from entering the Indian Civil Service. A protest

Narendra Krishna's opulence and exalted position in society did not isolate him from the middle classes who were gradually becoming the spearhead of attack on the policy of the British Government. He joined hands with them and gave a tremendous impetus to the political movement in the country. He passed away on 20 March 1903.

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MAHARAJA DURGA CHARAN LAHA

Durga Charan Laha (Law), noted for his honesty and spirit of enterprise in business as well as for his broad political sympathies, was born at Chinsurah on 23 November 1822. He was the eldest son of Pran Krishna Laha, a business entrepreneur, who competed seriously with European commercial firms in the field of export and import.

After receiving a sound English education at the Hindu College, Durga Charan joined his father's firm as an assistant in 1839. On his father's death in 1853, he took over control of the entire management of the firm.

The first Indian to be appointed a Port Commissioner of Calcutta, Durga Charan was also an Honorary Presidency Magistrate, in addition to being a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, a member of the Senate of the Calcutta University and Sheriff of Calcutta. In 1878 and 1882, he was nominated a member of the Supreme Legislative Council. In 1877 he received the title of Raja and in 1891, the title of Maharaja.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Throughout his life Durga Charan played an active part in public affairs. Because of his wisdom and experience, he was consulted on a variety of subjects by all classes of the community. In 1867, he wholeheartedly supported the aims and ideals of the *Hindu Mela*, which tried to promote a sense of nationalism among the Bengalees.

Towards the end of December 1885 he zealously participated in the deliberations of the second National Conference which critically discussed problems of national importance. Durga Charan, who presided over the deliberations of 25 December, was made a member of the special Committee appointed to draw up a plan for the re-constitution of Indian Councils in consonance with the interests of the people.

Durga Charan also actively participated in the tearing agitation against the Jury Notification of 20 October 1892. The jury system in Bengal was virtually abolished by this Notification. Durga Charan presided over the mammoth public meeting held at the Town Hall in Calcutta on 20 November 1892. At this meeting the insensate action of the Government came to be condemned by many speakers, including Jadulal Mallick. A petition was sent to Parliament. Under pressure of public opinion Government was forced to set up a Jury Commission, which, with such members as Ramesh Chandra Mitra and Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, had no other alternative than to recommend the restoration of the jury system in Bengal.

AN EXEMPLARY BUSINESS ENTREPRENEUR

Not through deceitful means did Durga Charan try to promote his business undertakings. He hated falsehood or deceit in any form, and "in the mercantile world his name was always synonymous with honesty and straightforward dealing". His enterprising spirit led him to buy 'Morrelgunj', comprising Lots I, II, III and IV in the Sundarbans, in 1878. Under his capable management Morrelgunj entered upon a new period of prosperity. He introduced order and invested capital both of which proved conducive to the development of his properties in Morrelgunj. New roads, tanks, markets, canals, schools and a charitable dispensary turned the whole area into a place worthy of habitation and cultivation.

In 1878, Durga Charan, with Narendra Krishna Deb, K. D. Pal and others of the British Indian Association, protested against the abolition of import duties on English textile goods by the Government in deference to the wishes of the magnates of Manchester. He wanted the Government of India to adopt the policy of protection in regard to Indian textile manufactures.

A PROGRESSIVE

He supported the Age of Consent Bill in 1891, as a result of which he had to face severe criticism from the orthodox Hindu

quarter. The *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika* of 17 February 1891 wrote: "The Raja is not a Brahmin, nor is he a leader of Hindu society; nor do his own caste men even recognize him as their leader". This adverse criticism could not cow him into surrendering what he considered to be a good cause concerning social progress.

A public-spirited man, widely known for his honesty, boldness and munificence, Durga Charan Laha passed away in 1902.

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BHOLANATH CHANDRA

Son of Rammohan Chandra, Bholanath Chandra was born in Calcutta in 1822. Bholanath had his schooling at the Oriental Seminary for two years before he entered the Hindu College in 1832. A favourite pupil of Richardson, his academic career was brilliant. Among his friends in the College, which he left in 1842, were Kissory Chand Mitra, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya. He took to business, but soon turned away from it to serve literature. His pen was used not only to promote social and political reforms, but also to advance the economic interests of his countrymen.

PROMOTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

Disappointed at the Government's disinclination to encourage high education, he exhorted his countrymen "to undertake the project and organization of Schools and Colleges from the independent funds of the nation". Unknowingly he antedated in these words the move of his compatriots to establish the National Council of Education in 1906.

ADVOCATE OF ECONOMIC SELF-HELP

Between 1873-74, he published in 'Mookerjee's Magazine' his famous article entitled 'A Voice for the Commerce and Manufactures of India'. After deploring the British policy to reduce Indians to the

condition of agriculturists, he emphasized that they must receive a commercial and industrial education for the sake of effecting their economic recovery. If given a share in the administration and if allowed to frame their own tariff, their condition was bound to change. He condemned the British policy of "setting bounds to native ambition for anything approaching commercial rivalry". To uphold a gigantic monopoly in the name of free trade could not dupe discerning Indians.

He told his countrymen that the redress of their grievances lay in self-help. He wrote: "The Native English Vernacular Papers should preach for the founding of independent Native Banks, Native Companies and Corporations, Native Mills and Factories, and Native Chambers of Commerce in the Presidencies. They should denounce the insensate practice of preferring foreign goods to home-made manufactures. They should inculcate the discipline of self-denial and the cultivation of patriotic sentiments. They should collect and compile details of Indian urban life to draw public attention to the helpless condition of our weavers, blacksmiths and mechanics. They should point out the enormous and increasing drain upon the profit of Indian labour to show that the country is growing poorer year by the year, and thoroughly expose the statistical delusion of the authorities. They should sedulously strive for the subversion of the policy, which, in addition to our political slavery, has steeped the country also in industrial slavery".

To lend edge to self-help, he exhorted Indians to practise "moral hostility" to British goods. This hostility was to be given expression through the resolution not to use the goods of England. He wrote: "Let us always remember that the progress of India rests with the people themselves and that her material prosperity must spring more from their own energy, perseverance and self-reliance than from any modification of the existing laws".

The father of economic nationalism, Bholanath Chandra passed away on 17 June 1910.

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PEARY CHARAN SIRCAR

A dedicated teacher all his life, Peary Charan Sircar was the third son of Bhairab Chandra Sircar. He was born in his maternal grandfather's house at Chorebagan in Calcutta on 23 January 1823.

He lost his father at the age of 15 and was brought up in humble circumstances. But for his brilliance as a student his academic career would have been cut short. A junior scholarship holder from the Hare School, he entered the Hindu College in 1838. David Hare had a big hand in shaping his life and career in school. In 1843 he topped the list of candidates appearing at the Senior Scholarship Examination. In 1846 he passed with credit the Library Examination, probably the toughest examination of his time in Bengal.

Second teacher of the Hooghly School from December 1843 to December 1845, Headmaster of the Baraset Government School from January 1846 to 1854, Headmaster of the Colootola Branch School (later known as Hare School) from 1854 to 1862 and Assistant Professor of Literature at the Presidency College from 1863 to the last day of his life, Peary Charan set an example of a moral and useful life which enriched the history of renaissance Bengal.

EDUCATIONIST WITH A PURPOSE

He always took a keen interest in teaching not merely to raise and sharpen the intellect of his students, but also to make them useful to society as moral and rational beings. In this task he followed in the footsteps of David Hare. He was always as ready with his sympathy and counsel as with his purse to help needy students. Not unoften did he pay their school fees, attend them when sick and even buy their medicines regardless of the expenses he had to incur.

To encourage independent thinking among students he established a debating club at Baraset. This club was subsequently organized as a branch of the Bethune Society and thrown open to outsiders as well. In addition to holding debates, essays were read and discussed by students under the guidance of Peary Charan himself. The Students' Association, started by him at the Presidency College, was designed to promote the same purpose.

To impart moral education to students he established in Calcutta, in July 1865, the Juvenile Association. Its main purpose was to train young boys to proper habits of life. Every Sunday morning Peary Charan and his enthusiastic friends assembled in the premises of either

the Colootola Branch School or some other educational institution to discuss with eager youths practical problems concerning morality. Occasionally well-illustrated instructions were given to them.

Mere general education for youths was not enough. Peary Charan tried to train them in self-help through vocational education. He wanted them to remove their aversion for manual labour in order to make themselves useful to society. With the aid of the Education Department and the active cooperation of some local high-minded gentlemen, he opened, in 1851, an agricultural class in the Baraset School. Arrangements were made inside the school compound for giving regular instructions to students on agriculture during their leisure hours. Elementary Botany and Chemistry, ploughing, sowing, supervision of crops, manuring, watering and other matters were taught by practical demonstration. Peary Charan himself set an inspiring example before the students by weeding, tilling and sowing with his own hands early in the morning before school hours. His knowledge of Botany and Agricultural Chemistry, his daily intercourse with the labouring class and his personal observation eminently qualified him for the new work he had undertaken in the Baraset School. Experts were invited from the Botanical Gardens to teach students the cultivation of arrow-root. Fruit, vegetables and arrow-root were sold by the School authorities in the open market. The proceeds of the sale were utilized in awarding prizes to students.

The Baraset School garden was turned into a model park, which was a source of delight to outsiders, including the Superintendent of the Botanical Gardens. All this was a lesson for Young Bengal.

PROMOTER OF FEMALE EDUCATION

Promotion of female education in the interests of social regeneration was one of the cherished objectives of his life. While at Baraset, he wholeheartedly cooperated with the progressive brothers, Nabin Krishna Mitra and Kali Krishna Mitra, in establishing a girls' school in 1847. The local people, steeped in ignorance and prejudice, thought that they would lose caste by sending their daughters to the school. The local zamindar even tried to cause physical harm to the sponsors of the school. But their opposition gradually melted away when Kali Krishna Mitra, a man of unimpeachable character, took upon himself the responsibility of coaching the girls personally. Europeans, like Sir James Colvin, Sir Edward Ryan and Mr. Bethune, took great interest in the progress of the institution.

For the female children of the labouring class an industrial school was started by Peary Charan under the management of the Baraset Female School Committee. In addition to teaching them reading, writing and arithmetic in Bengali, it helped them to gain proficiency in vocational work. To teach them self-help was the prime motive of Peary Charan.

In 1849, when Bethune established the Girls' School in Calcutta, Peary Charan did his best to induce Hindu parents to send their daughters there for education. Because of his unflagging interest in the School, he was appointed a member of its Executive Committee in 1873.

While in Calcutta, he opened a school at Chorebagan for the education of girls of the humbler class. He bore the whole cost of its management. The performance of the girls in this school turned out to be much better than that of the Bethune Girls' School.

Towards the end of his life he became increasingly articulate in his love for the Bengali language. He condemned his educated countrymen who treated Bengali books and periodicals as material to be read only by shopkeepers and women.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

That his educational efforts contributed to social regeneration cannot be doubted by anyone. To prevent the educated youths from falling a prey to the vice of drinking, he started the 'Bengal Temperance Society' on 15 November 1863 with the help and cooperation of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sambhu Nath Pandit, Girish Chandra Ghosh (editor of the 'Bengalee'), Keshab Chandra Sen, Kristo Das Pal, the Rev. C. H. Dall and many others. Its branches were opened in different parts of the country. Propaganda was carried on through the monthlies, 'Well-Wisher' in English and *Hitasadbhak* in Bengali. Peary Charan's incomplete book, *The Tree of Intemperance*, described in lurid colours the results of drinking to create an aversion for it in the minds of the educated youths.

More than once Peary Charan regretted the peculiar predilection of his educated countrymen for the vices of European character. Its good traits, its brilliant qualities, never seemed to make any impression on the Anglicized Indians, whose zeal for aping Europeans in food and dress appeared repulsive to sober and patriotic minds in the country.

A man of action, Peary Charan threw himself wholeheartedly into the movement initiated by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar for

alleviating the sufferings of widows in society. He not merely supported the cause of widow remarriage in his 'Well-Wisher', but also undertook the task of collecting funds for it by personally moving from door to door. Fear of social ostracism could not damp his ardour for what he had set out to do in cooperation with Vidyasagar. Side by side with encouraging widow remarriage, he openly condemned polygamy and the dowry system and urged his countrymen to abandon these evil customs. There was no sense in their clinging to ways and customs injurious to society, simply because these had come down from their forefathers.

Like Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Peary Charan also was burdened with heavy debts because of his unstintingly helping women in distress.

Peary Charan was a keen supporter of the *Hindu Mela*. To the younger generation he was known for his series of English Readers, but to his contemporaries he was a source of inspiration in their stupendous task of reform. English education could not make him irreligious. On the contrary, it helped him to tell the good from the bad and to develop a bold and independent spirit, which never allowed him to compromise with any wrong. It was this spirit that made him fight all his life against social wrongs, no matter how time-honoured they might have been. And it was this same spirit that prompted him to resign without a moment's hesitation the well-paid editorship of the 'Education Gazette' in August 1868, when his report on an accident in the Eastern Railway, showing up the attempt of the authorities to whitewash its seriousness, was taken exception to by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. This great reformer and "prince of Indian teachers", whose advice was constantly sought not only by the leaders of society but also by the Directors of Public Instruction, like G. Young, W. S. Atkinson and H. Woodrow, passed away 30 September 1875.

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MICHAEL MADHUSUDAN DUTT

Madhusudan Dutt was born on 25 January 1824 at Sagardari in Jessore. His father, Rajnarayan Datta, was a prosperous pleader of the Sadar Diwani Court in Calcutta.

While a mere boy, Madhusudan developed an abiding love for the ancient lore of India as preserved in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Kabikankan Chandi, Annadamangal, etc., under the influence of his mother, Jahnavidevi. He first read at the Kidderpore School, and later, in 1833, he was admitted to the Junior Department of the Hindu College. In the College he outshone all his classmates in general literature and English composition and made his mark as a composer of English verses. The recipient of many Junior and Senior Scholarships, he was looked upon as "the Jupiter among the bright stars of the College". Among his classmates were such future celebrities as Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, Rajendralal Mitra, Rajnarayan Basu and Shyama Charan Law.

The budding poet in Madhusudan found expression in his English poems published in the 'Gyananneshun', 'Literary Gazette', 'Literary Gleaner', etc. The spirit of Derozio and the benign guidance of Capt. D. L. Richardson constituted a never-failing source of inspiration to his poetical genius, which he felt could blossom forth fully if only he could visit England.

To avoid the marriage planned by his father and to fulfil his ambition of visiting 'the land of Albion', he suddenly left the Hindu College in 1842, while he was in the Second Class, and embraced Christianity, on 9 February 1843, to the shock and astonishment of all his near and dear ones. But conversion brought him nowhere near the fulfilment of his ambition, excepting adding 'Michael' to his name and enabling him to obtain admission to the 'secular department' of the Bishop's College as a lay student. He learnt Greek, Latin and Sanskrit for three years. When, in 1847, his father discontinued his monetary aid, he left the Bishop's College for Madras in quest of fortune and fame.

He spent eight years (1848-56) in Madras as a journalist and educationist, and received flattering attention there as a result of the publication of his English poems, 'Visions of the Past' and 'Captive Ladie'. In Calcutta, however, these poems were received with mixed feelings. Many, including Bethune and Gaurdas Bysack, felt that the

poet should strive to enrich his mother tongue and its literature by composing poems in Bengali.

Madhusudan, who had married Henrietta after separating himself from his first wife (Rebecca), returned to Calcutta in February 1856 on receipt of the news of his father's death. He recovered his parental property, worked for some time in the Police Magistrate's Court and simultaneously took to writing plays in Bengali verse which earned him plaudits in every educated quarter. His *Sarmishtha*, *Padmavati*, *Krishnakumari*, *Tilottama* and *Meghnadbadh Kavya* established his reputation as a great poet.

After effecting a revolution in the form of Bengali poetry, he sailed for England in June 1862 to qualify himself for the Bar. Though want and other difficulties hampered his studies, he was finally called to the Bar from Grey's Inn on 17 November 1866. After returning to Calcutta in 1867, he became an advocate of the High Court. But on account of his being a thoughtless spendthrift, which involved him in mounting debts, he could not shape well either as a barrister or as the adviser of the Raja of Purulia and ultimately had to spend the last days of his life in dire poverty and distress.

HIS SERVICES TO THE VERNACULAR LITERATURE

What renascent Bengal needed, as pointed out by Gaurdas Bysack to Madhusudan, was not another Byron or another Shelley in English, but a Byron or a Shelley in Bengali. Madhusudan realized the significance of this sage counsel after rendering into English the Sanskrit drama, *Ratnavali*, for the Belgachia Theatre managed by the Rajas of Paikpara. He considered the staging of this Sanskrit play in English as sheer waste of time and money. To get rid of the bad taste left in his mouth by *Ratnavali*, he composed *Sarmishtha*, a Bengali play full of genuine poetry but tinged with classicism. Its dramatization at the Belgachia Theatre was a resounding success. Yet greater honours and louder applause awaited him in the near future, and these came in a torrential flow in the wake of the publication of his *Padmavati* in 1860, which was a play in blank verse, a unique and daring departure of style in Bengali poetry. His *Tilottama-sambhava* of 1860, the first blank-verse epic in Bengali, had about it a Miltonic grandeur which threw into rapturous delight the educated gentry. This work broke the fetters of rhyme and exalted Bengali poetry to the lofty region of sublimity. But Madhusudan's greatest blank-verse epic was *Meghnadbadh Kavya*, on which rests his immortality.

Rajnarayan Basu rightly called Madhusudan "the Goethe of Bengal". He enriched Bengali literature and poetry by introducing into it not only blank verse but also the '14-footed' sonnet. By adding new dimensions to Bengali poetry Madhusudan became the first great national poet of renascent Bengal.

THE PATRIOT

The intensity with which he loved his mother tongue was nothing short of patriotism. Though stinking perpetually of beer, fowl, beef and other abominations, as Rajnarayan Basu tells us, Madhusudan was determined to reform Bengali poetry rather than wear "the imperial diadem of all the Russias". That he was able to achieve his purpose in the short course of three years speaks volumes for his genius.

His letter to Gaurdas Bysack from Paris, dated 26 January 1865, brings out clearly his patriotic love for his mother tongue. He wrote: "If there be any one among us anxious to leave a name behind him, ... let him devote himself to his mother tongue. That is his legitimate sphere—his proper element. European scholarship is good, inasmuch as it renders us masters of the intellectual resources of the most civilized quarters of the globe; but when we speak to the world, let us speak in our own language. Let those who feel that they have springs of fresh thought in them, fly to their mother tongue". He continued: "Here is a bit of 'lecture' for you and the gents who fancy that they are swarthy Macaulays and Carlyles and Thackerays! I assure you, they are nothing of the sort. I should scorn the pretensions of that man to be called 'educated' who is not master of his own language!" In the same letter he described Bengali as a very beautiful language, having all the elements of a great language in it. He held that those who despised Bengali because of their early defective education or their little knowledge of it were miserably wrong.

It was Madhusudan's great regret that he could not devote himself wholly to literary pursuits because of his poverty. He believed that no honour was to be had in India without money. Indians cared for those only who had money. Condemning this criterion of honour, he wrote to his friend, Gaurdas: "We are still a degraded people. The nobodies of Chorebagan and Barrabazar are honourable people of the country because they have money".

But even in the midst of his poverty in Paris he zealously applied

himself to the study of French, Italian and German with a view to enriching Bengali literature. He did it by exalting Bengali poetry to new heights of sublimity and grandeur through the introduction of the 14-footed sonnet in it.

HIS LOVE FOR THE COUNTRY

Though Anglicized, he was at heart an out and out Indian. The first line of his Bengali poem, 'Remember me, thy servant, mother', written on the eve of his departure for England, shows how dearly he loved his motherland.

His love for the country and its freedom was clearly reflected in his English poem, 'King Porus—A Legend of Old', published in the 'Literary Gleaner' of September 1843. After giving a stirring description of Porus's bold fight for his freedom against Alexander, he wrote, crying out for lost freedom and glory:

"But where, oh! where is Porus now?
And where the noble hearts that bled
For freedom—with the heroic glow
In patriot bosoms nourished—
—Hearts, eagle-like that recked not death,
And shrank before foul Thralldom's breath?
And where art thou—Fair Freedom!—thou—
Once goddess of Ind's sunny clime!
When glory's halo round her brow
Shone radiant, and she rose sublime,
Like her own towering Himalaye
To kiss the blue clouds thron'd on high!
Clime of the Sun!—how like a Dream—
How like bright sun-beams on a stream
That melt beneath gray twilight's eye—
That glory hath now flitted by!"

The spirit of Derozio must have got under the skin of Madhusudan and inspired him to compose this English poem of his on Porus, the embodiment of Indian freedom and Indian virility. The same conception of freedom and virility was projected by him in his description of the immortal characters, Ravana and his son Meghnad, in his famous Bengali epic *Meghnadvadh Kavya*. Though it is difficult to gauge the extent of the influence exercised over the

younger generation by Ravana's and Meghnad's ideas about freedom, yet there is no gainsaying the fact that they felt inspired when they read Ravana's address to the mighty ocean, urging it to shatter the chain of slavery (this is a reference to the stone bridge built by the hordes of Rama across the ocean in order to reach Lanka) it had been lured to wear round its neck by Rama. The same inspiration was derived by them when they read Meghnad's severe castigation of his uncle, Bibhisan, who had secretly helped their enemy, Lakshman, to reach the inner apartments of their castle. Unperturbed by this betrayal, brave Meghnad reminded his uncle of the necessity of remembering the age-old counsel that one's kinsmen, however worthless they might be, were always preferable to accomplished aliens.

All this apart, it was the irrepressible patriot in Madhusudan that prompted him to render the *Nil-Darpan* into English, which created a great sensation in European quarters. Another evidence of his patriotic heart was the high esteem in which he held Harish Chandra Mukherjee, the editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot'. To him, Harish Chandra was the man who had exercised the greatest amount of influence over the educated class of Indians. "His death", wrote Madhusudan to Rajnarayan Basu, "would be a real loss....to the progress of independence of mind and thought".

AWAKENER OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The vices of Young Bengal, particularly of that great horde of partly educated Babus devoted to nautch girls and tippling in the name of 'progress' were effectively exposed by him in the farce, *Akey Ki Bale Sabhyata* (Is This Civilization?). In the same farce he poured withering scorn on Nabababu's habit of speaking in Bengali which was ridiculously larded with English words. This farce could not be staged at the Belgachia Theatre because of the pressure put on the Raja of Paikpara by a gentleman of Young Bengal. But later this farce, as well as his *Buro Saliker Ghare Ro*, in which he ridiculed old-age lasciviousness, came to be staged by the National and Bengal Theatres.

ADVOCATE OF FEMALE EDUCATION

From his college days Madhusudan held that women should be educated for the welfare of the country. In his prize essay on the importance of educating Hindu women, he drove home the argument that unless they were enlightened, they would spread the infection

of their ignorance in the minds of those they brought up. Extensive dissemination of knowledge amongst women was the surest way to lead the nation to civilization and refinement, "for it is woman who first gives ideas to the future philosopher and the would-be poet".

Madhusudan had led a worthy life, and with him began to blow a fresh and bracing wind over the field of vernacular literature which had long lain cribbed, cabined and confined in his countrymen's timidity and mental lethargy. It was to this favourable wind of change that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya asked his countrymen to unfurl the flag of modern Bengal with the name of 'Madhusudan' inscribed on it. To nascent Bengal, to politically-conscious Bengal, to Bengal striving to reach her destiny, Michael Madhusudan Dutt was the most inspiring embodiment of manliness, intellectual freedom and ennobling humanism before which man's caste or creed melted into nothingness. He died a pauper on 29 June 1873 in Calcutta.

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HARISH CHANDRA MUKHERJEE

A dedicated promoter of his countrymen's interests, Harish Chandra Mukherjee, son of Ramdhan Mukherjee, was born in April 1824 at Bhowanipur in Calcutta. Because of poverty, he was forced to abandon his studies as a free student at the local Union School and look about for work. He was for some time in Messrs. Tullah & Co's auction room before joining the Military Auditor-General's Office as a clerk by passing a competitive examination in 1848. He rose to the position of Assistant Auditor on Rs. 400 per month before his death. But he was more interested in the acquisition of knowledge

than in anything else after he found his means of livelihood. An omnivorous reader of the Calcutta Public Library, he grew into a profound scholar in History, Political Science and Law.

AWAKENER OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

He wielded a facile and powerful pen, which enabled him to shape and direct the public opinion in the country. As a journalist associated with 'The Hindu Intelligencer' and 'The Bengal Recorder', he made his mark as a fearless critic of the Government. After taking over the management and editorship of 'The Hindoo Patriot' in June 1855, he carried on a relentless struggle against the injustices of which the British were guilty. It was he who drafted the petition that was sent to Parliament by the British Indian Association in 1853 on the eve of the renewal of the Charter. He was not merely a member of the British Indian Association, but its chief adviser in political matters. The petition emphasized not merely the inclusion of the non-official element in the Legislative Council, but also the participation of Indians in the administration of the country. Besides, the demand for the improvement of the judicial system was voiced side by side with the demand for "the removal of fiscal imposts of a prejudicial character".

He felt humiliated when, after the Mutiny, India was placed directly under the Crown without reference to the public opinion of the country. He wrote: "Can a revolution in the Indian Government be authorised by Parliament without consulting the wishes of the vast millions of men for whose benefit it is proposed to be made? The reply must be in the negative... The time is nearly come when all Indian questions must be solved by Indians. The mutinies have made patent to the English public what must be the effects of politics in which the native is allowed no voice". No better plea could have been advanced for the necessity of ascertaining Indian public opinion on matters of national importance as well as for allowing Indian participation in the administration of the country.

He also fearlessly criticized the retributory policy of the British Government immediately after the Mutiny.

HERO OF THE INDIGO REVOLT

Harish Chandra, who once thundered against the Oudh policy of Dalhousie, used the columns of his paper to expose the tyranny practised by the indigo planters, with the help of Government

officials, upon the poor ryots in Bengal. He defended the cause of the ryots at the cost of his health and money. During the indigo crisis, he sent lawyers to the mofussil courts to plead for the poor ryots. He drafted petitions and memorials for them and his house became the haven of the ryots in distress. His evidence before the Indigo Commission of 1860 is an eloquent tribute to his courageous espousal of the ryots' cause (see the sketch on 'Heroes of the Indigo Disturbances').

He was a keen supporter of the cause of social regeneration and worked to promote it in cooperation with his friends in the *Subrid Samiti*. The cause of widow remarriage was prominently dealt with in the columns of his journal.

To the grief of his countrymen, he died prematurely on 16 June 1861.

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LAL BEHARI DAY

Born of poor but honest parents at Talpur in Burdwan on 18 December 1824, Lal Behari Day is one of the most notable personalities in the nineteenth-century history of renaissance Bengal.

Lal Behari's father, a humble businessman of Calcutta, was a practical-minded man. Though an orthodox Vaishnava, he cast aside his religious prejudices and brought his 9-year-old son to Calcutta for giving him an English education, which in those days was considered the *sine qua non* for earning a competence in life. Lal Behari was admitted to the General Assembly's Institution in 1834, where he made his mark as a brilliant and industrious student. He read there for twelve years, and every year, excepting in 1838, he was the dux of his class. The chronic deficit of his father's exchequer caused him great trouble during the period of his studies, but he overcame it by sheer application and sincerity of purpose. Despite his acknowledged brilliance, he could not gain admission to Hare's

School, from where it was easier to move up to the Hindu College, because to Mr. David Hare he appeared as a "half-Christian" having read the Bible and thus a potential source of trouble if admitted to his school.

In the General Assembly's Institution he not only acquired admirable proficiency in the English language and its literature, but also developed an abiding interest in the tenets of Christianity, which ultimately led to his conversion at the hands of Dr. Alexander Duff in July 1843. He consciously left the religion of his ancestors, because in his informed adolescence his rationalism refused to sustain his faith in its idolatry and its concomitant prejudices any longer. Though on conversion he was admitted into the Established Church of Scotland, he actually spent his life in the bosom of the Free Church of Scotland. He was actively engaged in the service of the Free Church of Scotland from 1846 to 1867. But the most faithful part of his career began with his joining the Government Educational Service in September 1867. He served first as Headmaster of the Berhampore Collegiate School and then as Professor of English Literature in the Government Colleges at Berhampore and Hooghly from 1867 to 1889. In 1877, he was made a Fellow of the University of Calcutta in recognition of his services to the cause of education as well as to the promotion of English literature in the country.

PROMOTER OF MENTAL AWAKENING

As an educationist, Lal Behari Day wanted students to be laborious and to think for themselves. His own method of teaching was designed to instill into his students the love of academic labour and to awaken in them the spirit of research and inquiry. This was deemed necessary to prepare them for facing, without flinching, all the difficult problems in life as well as in society. It pained him very much to see students, in about 1878, depend exclusively upon 'note-books' to pass examinations. Cramming, cribbing and parrotry on the part of students were as much repugnant to him as the cheap and shoddy works of note-makers, analysts and key-smiths of school or college books. Treating them as pests in the country, he felt that the sooner they were "deported to the Andaman Island the better for the education of the rising generation". They made the students intellectual lotus-eaters and averse to all mental exertions "by thinking for them, by freeing them from the labour of search and inquiry, and by looking into the dictionary for them". In fact,

he could not think of a more pernicious system for ruining the intellect of the youth in the country.

As an enthusiastic member of the Bethune Society established on 11 December 1851 and the Bengal Social Science Association formed on the proposal of Mary Carpenter in the beginning of 1867, Lal Behari made the educated gentry take a lively interest in the cause of education in the country by the thought-provoking papers he read before them from time to time. Among these the most interesting ones read before the Bethune Society were 'Primary Education in Bengal' (10 December 1858), 'Vernacular Education in Bengal' (1859), 'English Education in Bengal' (1859) and 'Teaching of English Literature in the Colleges in Bengal' (19 March 1874). And the most noteworthy paper he read before the Bengal Social Science Association on 19 January 1869 was 'Compulsory Education in Bengal'.

ADVOCATE OF MASS EDUCATION

His two papers, 'Primary Education in Bengal' and 'Compulsory Education in Bengal', deserve more than a passing notice because of the emphasis they laid on the necessity of educating the masses both through Government and individual efforts for effecting a general mental awakening in the country. These two papers of his acquired special importance in the light of Sir (later Lord) John Lawrence's communication of 28 April 1868, which, while appreciating the need of educating the masses, declared the State Exchequer's inability to bear the financial burden of any plan to meet it. The Bengal Government was thus asked to draw up a plan on mass education and to execute it by levying an educational cess on land. But the British Indian Association vehemently protested against the proposed educational cess on land on the ground of its being a direct infringement of the solemn covenant entered into by the British Government with the zamindars of Bengal. To the Association, this compulsory taxation was unnecessary, since the existing voluntary system, together with the Government grants-in-aid, was serving the purpose of mass education. The bourgeois mentality of the Association was expressed by Kissory Chand Mitra, who opined that it was sufficient to educate the upper and middle classes, for through them the lower classes could be elevated.

Lal Behari's ideas on mass education proved far ahead of his time. In his two papers he discussed whether education should be

made a civil right and how far legislative interference would be expedient. He argued that if every child, as a member of society, was educated, he was bound to grow into a man exercising a salutary influence over all. An uneducated man, unaware of his rights and duties, could not but be a curse to, and a drag on, society. Thus the guardians of society and of the State as well stood to gain if they insisted upon every parent educating his male children. His emphasis was on educating the male children, for he made it clear that any Government order which compelled every girl to be educated was bound to meet with violent opposition from the people still lying steeped in dense ignorance. He thus believed that when all the boys of the country were educated, the education of the girls could not be long delayed.

To Lal Behari, it was the Government's duty to provide for mass education. On the other hand, the people also had a right to be educated at Government expense. He had a dig at the British Indian Association when he pointed out that the higher law of moral justice, not the law of the Revenue Code, demanded that every zamindar of the country should bear a large part of the educational expense of the ryot. Voluntary assistance to schools on the part of a few individuals could never meet the national want. Voluntary education, he pointed out, could succeed only among a people accustomed to freedom. But the Bengalees had never known freedom. The grinding despotism of their previous rulers, combined with sacerdotalism, had completely destroyed their sense of freedom. They had always looked upon Government as their *Ma-Bap*—their father and mother. "Among such a Government-ridden people", continued Lal Behari, "the voluntary principle must be an unmeaning phrase".

Asking the Government and the rich zamindars to face the problem squarely and honestly, he stressed the need of mass education to make the people self-reliant as well as to diminish the number of crimes in society. The money spent on catching rogues and thieves, he suggested, could be profitably spent on educating the poor Indian masses. Schools, not jails, were the best preventives of crime.

He urged that all boys between the ages of 6 and 12 should be compelled to attend schools. According to his modest computation, their education would require 40,000 primary schools, 80 normal schools for training teachers and 80 vernacular high schools. To meet the cost of his scheme, he proposed that 10 lakhs should be raised in the shape of fees from students and 22 lakhs raised by enhancing

the salt-tax by two annas in the rupee, while Government should contribute 21 lakhs and the zamindars 7 lakhs (i.e. 2 per cent. of the land revenue).

Sir John Lawrence, who attended the lecture of Lal Behari at the Bethune Society on 10 December 1858, went away much more enlightened on the problem of mass education in the country.

It will not be out of place to record here Lal Behari's humble effort to promote female education in Bengal. While posted in Kalna in connection with the work of the Free Church of Scotland, he opened a girls' school there, which by 1857 had forty-five girls on the roll. Unfortunately, however, not merely the opposition of his ignorant countrymen, but also the paucity of funds tended to retard the progress of this school. It was this unhelpful situation which made him realize that without educating the boys first it would not be possible for anyone to create a favourable climate for the progress of female education in the country.

SOCIAL REFORMER

If Lal Behari was an open denouncer of the Hindu caste system, he was no less a forthright critic of the inequality of status that existed between Indian and European missionaries. Much of this inequality was, however, removed as a result of his opposition, which lent strength to the remonstrations of the Rev. Krishna Mohan Banerjea on the same problem.

But he is better known for his full-blooded condemnation of the tyranny practised by zaminders on the ryots in Bengal. This tyranny was movingly described in his classic novel, 'Govinda Samanta; Or The History of a Bengal Raiyat', which elicited the praise of even a scientist like Charles Darwin. 'Govinda Samanta' has been likened to Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', because of its powerful espousal of the cause of the children of the soil, the poor and simple ryots, whose energies were paralysed by the systematic oppression they suffered at the hands of the zamindars. "The zamindar's Katcheri", thundered Lal Behari, "is the scene of the ryot's degradation, where he is derided, spat upon, and treated as if he were the veriest vermin in creation". In 'Govinda Samanta' Hindu women's widowhood also, together with the degrading bondage it imposed upon them, came to be roundly condemned. The novel not only pricked the conscience of the oppressive zamindars, but also aroused the social consciousness of Lal Behari's educated compatriots,

many of whom would gradually begin to feel that they had not done their duty by the downtrodden in the country.

Lal Behari Day, master of English prose, won for himself an honourable place in the roll of names that adorn the annals of Anglo-Indian literature. His solicitude for the welfare of his countrymen was clearly reflected in his writings, which were marked as much by clarity of thought and disciplined approach to problems as by lucidity of style. He died in Calcutta on 28 October 1894.

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NABIN KRISHNA BANDYOPADHYAYA

A Brahmo progressive, Nabin Krishna Bandyopadhyaya was born in 1824 at Ghoshpara in Nadia.

He was offered the post of Deputy Magistrate by Government after the publication of his book entitled 'Precedents on Rent Law'. But he declined the offer and chose to work to further the interests of his countrymen. A faithful collaborator of Debendranath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Datta, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rajnarayan Basu in the task of freeing society from the grip of superstitions, prejudices and outdated customs, he edited the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* from 1855 to 1859. For some time he was also associated with the 'Hindoo Patriot' and the 'Education Gazette'.

As a member of the British Indian Association, he strongly protested against the oppression practised by the European indigo planters.

He died in December 1896.

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SASHI CHANDRA DATTA

Son of Pitambar Datta, Sashi Chandra Datta was born about 1824 in Calcutta. Educated at the Hindu College, he was an ardent admirer of Capt. D. L. Richardson. Joining the Government Treasury as a clerk, he steadily rose to the position of Head Assistant in the Accounts Department of the Bengal Government. When his claims to promotion to the position of Assistant Secretary were set aside by Sir George Campbell, he voluntarily retired in protest against the gross injustice done to him.

He was an accomplished writer in English, and his English essays not only excited the admiration of English critics but also received the compliment of a lengthy review in Blackwood's Magazine.

HIS SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

Sashi Chandra's spirit of independence was as embarrassing to the English as to his own countrymen, and this spirit was clearly reflected in his 'Reminiscences of a Kerani's Life' published serially in Mookerjee's Magazine from June 1873 to June 1874.

In his 'Reminiscences' he attacked the system of patronage under which the Secretary to the Government offered appointments to the newly-created office of Deputy Magistrate, not to meritorious candidates, but to members of the highest native families and well-connected Eurasians.

This kind of patronage was designed to encourage Indian servility to those in power—to every '*topiwallah*' in office. Sashi Chandra could neither cultivate the '*jo-bukum*' mentality, nor persuade himself to appear before the '*hoozor*' with bare feet. Cringing before *sahibs* was against his grain.

The English feeling of racial superiority was intolerable to him. *Sahibs* did not hesitate to cane native clerks in public if there was any sign of disrespect, however unintentional it might be, in the latter's conduct. Arrogant and half-educated officers lost their temper if native assistants did not *salaam* to them. Thus the fear of bureaucratic displeasure made the native clerks very servile.

Sashi Chandra held up this English sense of racial superiority to ridicule by criticizing their concept of fitness, which compelled poor India to feed the so-called fit men brought from England, who were so many "drones to the bargain". He wondered how long the

English would continue to think that they were entitled to every thing in India because they had conquered the country.

A CRITIC OF THE JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

Legal inequality between European and Indian offenders in courts of law, another unmistakable sign of the former's racial superiority, warped the system of judicial administration in the country. He cited an instance to show how this continuing inequality in the eye of the law led to miscarriage of justice. An indigo-planter, accused of acts of cruelty against ryots, was let off by the mofussil court because of his plea that he was a European by birth and as such not subject to trial by that court. In the Supreme Court he pleaded that he was not a European, and thus did not come within the court's jurisdiction. The jury accepted his plea and let him off.

Ill-chosen native juries, swayed by prejudices against lower class native offenders, not unoften made the impartial administration of justice impossible. Christian jurors were also often found guilty of the same offence. The administration of justice was further affected both by the abominable interpretation of what the witness said and the Council's irrelevant cross-examination.

HIS IDEAS ON THE MUTINY

British officers found his ideas on the Sepoy Mutiny very unpalatable. It hurt him to see a Eurasian assistant, who had accompanied Peel's Brigade against the mutineers, sell in office various articles of booty, such as gold and silver ornaments, silver plates, shawls, brocades, velvet *chadars* worked with gold, etc. Sashi Chandra held that these were all taken from the people, who were called mutineers so that they might be plundered. Referring to a nose-ring in the articles displayed for sale, he pointed out to the seller that it belonged to a female who certainly could not have fought with the mutineers. Obviously enough, it was "torn off from the nose of a poor woman who did not know where to fly for protection". He further held that during the Mutiny many innocent people were hanged and shot, "whose only misfortune was that they came across the avenging parties by accident".

In his 'Shankar, a Tale of the Indian Mutiny', Sashi Chandra made disclosures which startled both Sir Erskine Perry and Sir Ashley Eden. Needless to say, he incurred the displeasure of the Government for giving expression to his views on the Mutiny.

ADVOCATE OF SELF-DEFENCE

In spite of the fact that the English protected the Indians, there were many among the latter who wished to learn fighting in order to be able to defend their country in the hour of need. It would thus be expedient to teach them fighting in a military school. Sashi Chandra said: "The occasion may arise when it will be of inestimable value to them. . . . England may get tired of the work of evangelizing India, and may give her up altogether some day when we least expect it, and then we are done for, only because the Government will not allow us to learn the use of arms". He even suggested that some day a coalition might force England to leave India.

That Sashi Chandra, though bound to 'keranidom', was dreaming of a free India, able to defend herself against her enemies, is clear from his plea for the military training of Indians. A spirit of uncompromising independence marked the character of Sashi Chandra Datta, who is said to have exercised a very healthy influence over his nephew, Romesh Chunder Dutt. Even the title of 'Rai Bahadur' could not make him truckle to the British. He passed away on 30 December 1885.

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RASH BEHARI MUKHOPADHYAYA

An unflinching advocate of social reform and progress, Rash Behari Mukhopadhyaya was born in 1825 at Tarpasa in Bikrampur, Dacca. Owing to the death of his parents in his childhood, he was brought up by his uncle, who had him married eight times, according to the privilege of the *kulins*, for the sake of money. Rash Behari worked for a few years as *tabisildar* of a Mymensingh zamindar.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

He had to give up his job in Mymensingh because of his outspoken criticism of the *kulin* practice of polygamy and of taking dowry in his book, *Ballalsamsodhinee*. Though called a hypocrite because of his having eight wives while criticizing polygamy, he

defended himself by saying that he had learnt from personal experience that the practice was essentially harmful to society. Undaunted by the hostility of his critics, he launched a campaign on his own against what appeared to him as iniquitous customs. He delivered lectures against *kulinism* in Dacca. Copies of his *Ballalsamsodhinee* were also distributed. In condemnation of polygamy and the dowry system he drew up a Memorial and had it signed by his supporters before submitting it to Lord Northbrook on the occasion of his visit to Dacca. Well known leaders from Calcutta, including Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and the Rev. James Long, offered their unqualified support to Rash Behari's endeavour at social reform in East Bengal.

The Memorial pointed out that the detestable customs of polygamy and dowry prevalent among the *kulin* Brahmins were a cause of distress and misery to the poor and helpless females in society. *Kulin Brahmins* had made marriage their profession and an oblique source of their sustenance, without ever caring for the welfare of their innumerable wives. The Memorial further pointed out that these customs were not sanctioned by any established authority in society. Public morality and public conscience could never approve of them.

Rash Behari continued to labour indefatigably in the interests of the cause he had espoused. He extended his campaign to Jessore, Barisal and Faridpur. He composed poems pouring withering ridicule not only on the practice of polygamy, but also on that of very young boys marrying much older girls and old men, sometimes on the verge of death, marrying tender young girls.

Believing in the dictum that example is better than precept, he had his daughter and son married in purposeful violation of the *kulin* marriage rules. Fearless of social obloquy and ostracism, Rash Behari determinedly fought against the evils of *kulinism* which stood in the way of social progress and regeneration.

He died in 1894.

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RAJNARAYAN BASU

A high priest of Indian nationalism and an outspoken critic of his educated countrymen's slavish imitation of Western manners and customs, Rajnarayan Basu was born at Boral in the 24-Parganas on 7 September 1826. His father, Nanda Kishore Basu, was an ardent disciple of Raja Rammohun Roy. Progressive views, stemming from English education, came to be combined in an admirable manner with wholesome ideas of Indian life in the Basu family. Rajnarayan himself was a model of such a synthesis.

Young Rajnarayan acquitted himself remarkably well in the Hare School. His sharp intelligence and spirit of enquiry did not fail to attract the attention of David Hare himself. His brief career at the Hindu College from 1840 to 1843 was brilliant. His scholarship and his powers of reflection and discrimination were praised even by J. W. Kaye in the 'Bengal Herald' of 14 January 1843. He left the Hindu College owing to illness and worked for the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* from 1846 to 1849, translating into English the Upanishads. In May 1849 he joined the Sanskrit College as the second teacher in English. In February 1851 he took up his new appointment as Headmaster of the Midnapore Zilla School, where he worked with unflagging enthusiasm until 1866. Illness forced him to go on leave and in 1868 he retired from Government service. For 18 years Midnapore, from where he refused to move out even on promotion, became one of the most important centres of his inspiring activities.

MENTAL AWAKENING

The remarkable improvement in the performance of the students of the Midnapore School was frankly attributed by the Council of Education to the zealous efforts of Rajnarayan Basu. He did not approve of students listening merely to the lectures of their teachers. He wanted them to be deeply inquiring and put questions to their teachers in the classroom. To help them develop their power of speech and their critical faculty, he established a debating society in the School following in the footsteps of David Hare. Eager to develop the brain as well as the brawn of his students, he encouraged them to participate in manly games like fives and rackets. And to dissuade them from depending exclusively upon their school text-books for knowledge, he encouraged them to read books

outside their limited curriculum and had them examined on this kind of reading. A public library was also established in Midnapore to encourage the habit of reading among the young and the old.

In the interest of mass education he established a night school for workers at Midnapore. In regard to the importance of female education, to spread which he also established a girls' school at Midnapore, he held that it was futile to think of female emancipation in the country without first educating them properly. He expressed this view of his to Miss Acroyd much later in life.

HIS VIEWS ABOUT EDUCATION

Every inch a nationalist, Rajnarayan's views about education went a long way in arousing in his countrymen a spirit of nationalism. He held that national progress depended upon the development of a national literature, which again in its turn was dependent upon the growth of a well-nourished vernacular language. And the vernacular language could not be developed in the right manner if the English-educated intellectuals of the country continued to give all their attention to English alone. Bethune also, in his letter of 20 July 1849 to Gaurdas Bysack, expressed his dislike of a gifted poet like Michael Madhusudan Dutt composing his 'Captive Ladie' in English. He remarked that Michael stood a better chance of achieving a lasting reputation for himself by employing his taste and talents, which he had cultivated by his study of English, in improving the standard and adding to the stock of the poems of his own language. A year earlier, in 1848, Rajnarayan offered the same advice to his countrymen in an article of his. He regretted that 25 years of English education had only created 2,000 Anglophiles very few of whom could express themselves correctly in English. And these were the persons who shamelessly wanted that English should be made the national language of India. He felt pained to see that these men who learnt English learnt also at the same time to derest their own culture and their own vernacular language. They hated everything that was indigenous, while on the other hand Europeans worked hard to learn Sanskrit and to unravel the sources of Indian culture. They learnt by heart the history of European countries and took pains to remember the names of European towns and villages, while the history of their own country, the condition of its people in the past and even the names of places a little beyond Calcutta remained unknown to them.

Even in the Journal of the Asiatic Society, which was so avidly read by Orientalists in the West, the English-educated Indians found no interest.

Rajnarayan unmasked those also who outwardly pretended to care for the vernacular language. Actually, he wrote, they were fond of conversing in English among themselves and were much too eager to deliver speeches in English at public meetings. Nothing was more painful to him than to see an educated Bengali treating with contempt the cultural heritage of his motherland.

The stepmotherly treatment of the vernacular language at the hands of the British Government also came to be trenchantly criticized by Rajnarayan. The Government spent more money on English schools than on vernacular schools, which were ill-supplied with men and material. Neither was any serious attempt made to enforce the use of Bengali in all courts of law in spite of the provision made for it under Act XXIX of 1837.

He emphasized that the Bengali language had to be developed, for it was only in Bengali that the people of Bengal could best express their thoughts, feelings and emotions.

There was an unmistakable ring of patriotism when he said, addressing the old students of Presidency College at their first reunion meeting in January 1875, that the spread of English education would be considered to be truly beneficial only when educated Indians, like the English, would acquire enough physical strength and become bold, persevering, resolute and freedom-loving. This education would be considered to have done them good if they were able to establish colleges on their own, to initiate a system of female education without looking to Christian women for assistance, to write poems and novels reflecting the genius of the land, to carry on scientific research independently, to make discoveries and inventions by their own efforts, to establish and manage their own industries, to cease to be dependent upon the British Government's favour for getting their wants removed, and, lastly, to desist from aping English manners and customs.

Education made the Bengalees increasingly averse to physical labour. They became *baboos*. Rajnarayan noted with regret that even the sons of the humble village folk, reading in night schools, were not free from this tendency. With little education they took to socks and shoes and became averse to cultivation of the land to the great chagrin of their parents.

RELIGION AND NATIONALISM

Rajnarayan was a Brahmo, and even in his propagation of Brahmoism he came to be actuated by a strong feeling of nationalism. His advice to Sib Chandra Deb, in his letter of 15 June 1878, was that the *Sadbaran Brahmo Samaj* should adopt a national form of worship, a national theistic textbook and a national ritual. Its followers should renounce marked foreign customs and manners repugnant to the general feeling of the nation. He also urged that they should conduct their reformatory movements in a national way so as to suit the tastes and ideas of the nation without compromising their Brahmo principles.

Though he was a staunch Brahmo condemning idolatrous practices, including the belief of Keshab Chandra Sen's followers in *avatarism*, his Brahmoism was deeply rooted in the theistic principles of Hinduism. He could never think of himself as a Brahmo outside the pale of Hinduism. That explains his vehement opposition to the Brahmo Marriage Act (subsequently promulgated as Civil Marriage Act III) of 1872, which the Government passed under pressure of the agitation carried on by Keshab Chandra Sen since 1867. Rajnarayan criticized the Act as an affront to the Hindu religion since it ignored Brahmo marriage as a sacrament. It made a civil ceremony necessary for giving validity to the religious ceremony. Rajnarayan as the leader of the *Adi Brahmo Samaj* condemned this move, which attempted to separate the Brahmos from the Hindus.

A Brahmo drawing his spiritual sustenance from Vedantic philosophy, Rajnarayan gladdened the hearts of his followers as well as of the Hindus by delivering, on 15 September 1872, a speech on 'The Superiority of the Hindu Religion'. The whole speech was saturated with the spirit of nationalism. The meeting, held under the auspices of the National Society, was presided over by Debendranath Tagore.

SOCIAL REFORMER

Rajnarayan hated all caste or racial distinctions and stood for progress in society. He always advocated that his educated countrymen should take in, not the vices, but the virtues of Englishmen. But he was against any change in society at the cost of its distinctive texture.

He regretted the absence of a distinctive dress among the Bengalees. The spectacle of disunity in their apparel at any public

meeting distressed him very much. Their eagerness to don European apparel was condemned by him. Even Europeans themselves thought their costume unsuitable in a country like India. That was why Sir Cecil Beadon often used to wear *pyjama* and *punjabi*.

All round imitation had reduced Bengalees to the position of slaves in society. They were fond of eating what the English ate and fond of doing what the English did. They went to England for the sake of prestige, and death in England was as welcome to them as death in Benares to an orthodox Hindu. Rajnarayan was not against their going to England, but what he could not stand was their false sense of superiority which isolated them from society. They could mix neither with their own people nor with the English, who treated them with disdain.

Rajnarayan was also a great supporter of the widow remarriage movement initiated by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. He welcomed Act XV of 1856 which legalized widow remarriage and took the initiative in getting his cousin, Durganarayan Basu, and his own brother, Madhusudan Basu, married to widows.

Like Peary Charan Sircar, he also realized the evil effects of drinking in society. In 1861, he established at Midnapore a Temperance Society at the meetings of which songs in praise of temperance were sung with a view to inducing drunkards to give up drinking.

HIS SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM

His spirit of nationalism underlay almost every speech or activity of his. In his 'Prospectus of a Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal', which was published in 1866, he drew the attention of his countrymen to the need of cultivating indigenous physical exercise, indigenous medicine and music. He also desired that English should be taught to children only after they had been given a sound knowledge of Sanskrit and Bengali and been taught to speak and write letters to each other in undiluted Bengali. Elders must make it a point to speak in Bengali at all public meetings. Any social reform attempted to be introduced in society must be in accordance with the best principles of the Shastras. Wholesome Indian customs and festivals, which tended to strengthen brotherly relations, should be observed. Foreign dress and foreign ways of taking food must be given up.

Members of this Society strictly observed the practice of speaking

in undiluted Bengali. Anyone who used a single English word was fined one pice. They observed the 1st of *Baisakh* as their New Year day. There were many other practices also which were meant to arouse among its members a strong national feeling.

This Society inspired Nabagopal Mitra to inaugurate the *Hindu Mela* in 1867. It came to be held every year. In 1875 Rajnarayan presided over the *Mela*.

The *Hindu Mela* was followed by the establishment of the National Society, which held a meeting every month addressed by an eminent man on some problem having a bearing on national regeneration. Rajnarayan himself read three important papers before the Society.

Under the supervision of the Society was the National School, which taught physical exercise, horse-riding, rifle-shooting, in addition to surveying, engineering, chemistry and music.

Rajnarayan wanted his countrymen to take to business and industry. Europeans found in industrial and commercial activities the path to prosperity and domination. But Bengalees looked upon service as the only means of earning their livelihood. Many of them went to England to become barristers and Civilians, but none to acquire technical knowledge. He added that if Bengalees became a nation of school masters and pleaders and failed to persuade themselves to take any interest in business and commerce, they would become increasingly poorer and dependent upon England. As it was, they had already become so in regard to their *dhuti*, cutlery, salt and even their matchbox, none of which was manufactured at home nor were any attempts made to do so. Knowledge of Shakespeare, Milton and Differential Calculus, continued Rajnarayan in his sarcastic vein, had given the Bengali community an outward glamour, whereas inside there was nothing but void. He wondered whether the Bengalees expected the Britishers to provide them with their daily food, too!

In 1881, his spirit of nationalism took a concrete form in his scheme of a *Maha Hindu Samiti* (the Great Union of Hindus). His appeal was that all who had the nation's good at heart would do well to consider the feasibility of the proposal which, if carried out, was bound to effect a revolution in the temporal and spiritual economy of the "Aryan nation". The whole scheme was aimed at national regeneration. That apart, it wanted to bring about a union of the Bengalees with the people of the other provinces of India.

His appeal did not go in vain, for from 1890 a movement was set on foot to form such a union of the Hindus.

When the Indian Association was formed on 26 July 1876, Rajnarayan proved to be an enthusiastic member of its Executive Committee. He joined the agitation started by the Association against Lytton's Vernacular Press Act of 1878.

He also became the President of the *Sanjibani Sabha*, which endeavoured to bring about national regeneration and encouraged the production of indigenous goods. Both Rabindranath Tagore and Jyotirindranath Tagore came to be influenced considerably by his nationalistic ideas.

An untiring preacher of nationalism, Rajnarayan Basu died at Deoghar on 18 September 1899.

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BHUDEV MUKHOPADHYAYA

Son of Biswanath Tarkabhusan, Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya was born in Calcutta on 22 February 1827. He read in the Sanskrit College and some other institutions before entering the seventh class of the Hindu College in 1839. His academic career was consistently brilliant. In 1842, he won a senior scholarship of Rs 40/- per month, and left the Hindu College in 1845 with a certificate of "creditable proficiency in the English Language and Literature as well as in the Elements of General Knowledge".

He worked as Headmaster of the Hindu Charitable Institution in 1846 and of the Chandernagore Seminary for a year from 1847 prior to joining the English Department of the Calcutta Madrasa as second teacher in December 1848. Because of his honesty and

industry, his promotion in Government service was rapid. Headmaster of the Howrah School in October 1849, Superintendent of the Hooghly Normal School in June 1856 (a post obtained by beating Michael Madhusudan Dutt in a competitive examination) and Officiating Inspector of Schools in July 1862, Bhudev steadily rose to the position of Acting Inspector of Schools in Class I of the Bengal Educational Service in 1877. It was in that year that the C.I.E. was conferred upon him. In January 1882, he was nominated a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. In February the same year he was appointed a member of the Educational Commission set up under Sir William Hunter as Chairman. He retired from Government service on 23 July 1883.

EXEMPLAR OF SELF-RESPECT

Too full of self-respect, Bhudev hated the thought of fawning upon Englishmen for a consideration. On one occasion he told Hodgson Pratt, the Civilian Visitor to the Howrah School, that he never visited any European official who kept Indians waiting outside to belittle them deliberately. He frequently visited F. J. Mouat, the Rev. James Long and the Rev. Alexander Duff, because they never tried to rub in upon him their superiority by keeping him waiting outside. Pratt understood Bhudev's viewpoint and always treated him as a friend. After Bhudev's death, Pratt wrote from England: "He is my first Indian friend. I have seldom known a finer soul. . . . He seemed incapable of saying a word more than he felt, or of resorting to flattery or obsequiousness to his English visitor and official superior. He could not be ignorant, however, that if he pleased that visitor, it might not improbably be an advantage to him for his life". He never flattered any European official, because that hurt his sense of self-respect.

THE EDUCATIONIST

It was with the zeal of a missionary that he addressed himself to the task of spreading education among his countrymen. His work at the Hindu Charitable Institution in 1846, his establishment of the Chandernagore Seminary in 1847 with the help of the local people and of the school at Sripur with the aid of the local zamindar and his organization of Normal Schools in different parts of Bengal after 1862 bear ample testimony to his sincere endeavour to educate his countrymen.

Bhudev was bitterly opposed to Sir George Campbell's policy of abolishing schools and colleges established earlier to provide higher education to the people. In 1872, Campbell reduced Berhampore, Krishnagar and Sanskrit Colleges to second-grade institutions by abolishing the B.A. course therein. The Hooghly Mohsin College would have also been subjected to the same tragic fate but for vehement public opposition.

In a satire in the 'Education Gazette' (28 *Baisakh* 1280 B.S.) Bhudev brought out clearly how out of fear and jealousy Campbell was trying to deny higher education to the people. To Campbell, higher education was a curse, because it tended to make the English-educated Bengalees hostile to the British administration. Bengalees, Campbell declared, must go in for English education in future at their own expense.

This was intolerable to Bhudev. His sentiments inspired the Rajshahi Sabha, including such zamindars as Haranath Roy of Dubalhati and Raja Pramathanath Roy of Dighapatia, to offer their financial assistance for upgrading the Boalia School to a first-grade college, known as the Rajshahi College, in 1878.

PATRIOTIC ADVOCATE OF VERNACULAR EDUCATION

His association with the *Tattwabodhini Sabha* and his editorship of the *Siksha-Darpan*, a Bengali monthly started about 1864, proved fruitful in spreading knowledge in the vernacular. The *Siksha-Darpan*, particularly, purveyed to the villagers useful knowledge (e.g., of the laws of the country) and gists of reports published in other journals in Calcutta. Bhudev's idea was that villagers would be benefited if they read the journal regularly and thereby realized the futility of keeping themselves engaged in mutual rivalry and paltry discussions.

Though aware of the advantages of learning English, Bhudev always exhorted Bengali youths to learn Sanskrit and Bengali. He wanted Bengali particularly to be seriously cultivated in all colleges. This vernacular could not be improved if students were merely asked to translate a few Sanskrit passages into Bengali. His sentiments on the vernacular language were misunderstood by Principal Tawney of Presidency College, who is reported to have remarked: "Bhudev with his C.I.E. and 1,500 a month is still anti-British". The displeasure of Tawney could not, however, frighten the patriot into abandoning his pro-Indian views on vernacular education.

He made it clear that it was only through the vernacular that unity could be attained and patriotism promoted. The knowledge of English, though useful, should not Anglicize Indians.

He held that if in future the English language culturally dominated India, it would be so due to the weakness of the English-educated Indians, who seemed to be more eager than Englishmen themselves to retain the use of the English language in their official and unofficial intercourse. Thus in spite of laws being passed to legalize the use of the vernacular, side by side with English, in courts of law, Indians continued to turn increasingly to English for transacting judicial business. This was advantageous to the English Magistrate or Judge, but none realized that it was positively disadvantageous to the masses. Obviously, a false sense of prestige had deprived Indians of their bearings in society.

ADVOCATE OF NATIONAL UNITY

A practical-minded political thinker, Bhudev held that, as the Mahrattas and the Sikhs could not rise above their petty patriotism, God had sent the British—English, Welsh, Scotch, Irish, Dissenters, Protestants, Roman Catholics, all engaged, in spite of their differences, in serving the interests of their motherland—to teach Indians how to unite and live together in harmony in the larger interests of the country. This idea was expressed by him in his 'History of Bengal' (3rd Part) with a view to promoting the cause of national unity in the country.

Like the Greeks, Romans and the English, Indians should never discard their national feeling, and this national feeling, according to him, could be best promoted through the common use of Hindi as the national language of India.

To promote national unity he also suggested provincial marriages between members of the same caste. But his most helpful suggestion in this respect was that caste-ism and exclusiveness should not be practised at home. Muslims, Christians and members of other castes should be treated as honourable guests in every Hindu household in accordance with the principles of *Sanatan Hindu Dharma* which transcended all petty religious or sectarian differences.

He firmly believed that the chariot of the State, like the chariot of Lord Jagannath, could be drawn effectively if all the communities joined hands. He thus pointed out that if in England Protestants and Catholics could unite to promote the feeling of nationality, the

Hindus, Muslims and Indian Christians could also unite to promote the same feeling in India. Indian Christians, disdained by European Christians, had no alternative but to identify themselves with the children of the soil. It was encouraging to see Madras Christians feeling proud of the cultural roots they had in Hinduism. They did not like the greed and arrogance of the English priests. They had changed their religion but not their nationality. It was also encouraging to see cultured Muslims, who voluntarily participated in Hindu festivals, appreciative of Hindu culture.

Some English officials, as Bhudev pointed in his essay *Bharatbarser Musalman*, tried to keep alive the strife between Hindus and Muslims by subtly following the traditional policy of divide and rule. They tried to excite the jealousy of the Hindus by showing special favour to the Muslims and vice versa as the occasion demanded. Bhudev thus advised his countrymen to guard themselves against this shrewd and divisive policy pursued by some English administrators.

In his 'History of Bengal' (3rd Part) he made it clear that Indians had to pay dearly for the divisive influence of their caste system as well as of the mutual hatred that existed between the Bengalees, Biharis, Oriyas, Mahrattas, Punjabis, etc., and between Hindus and Muslims in general. The Mahrattas and the Sikhs were able to become powerful because they did not allow the caste system to interfere with their cause of unity. Amongst the Mahrattas the ablest always came to power: Holkar was a sweeper, Gaekwad a shepherd and Sindhia a *kahar* (utensil-cleaner).

But in spite of their keeping the caste system under control, the Mahrattas and the Sikhs could not develop any love for the country as a whole. Their sense of belonging was circumscribed by their limited sense of nationality, which stood in the way of their identifying themselves with Indians in Bengal or other provinces. Theirs was a petty patriotism which prevented them from treating all Indians as their brethren. As stated earlier, Bhudev held that the credit of uniting India and of giving Indians a sense of belonging went to the British. Similarly, the credit of teaching the values of equality to Indians had to be given to the Muslims.

The dream of national unity was best visualized by him in his *Swapnalabdha Bharatbarser Itibas* (1895). In this history of India, obtained in a dream, he referred to Emperor Shah Alam voluntarily handing over the imperial crown to the Mahratta ruler, Ramchandra, a worthy descendant of Sivaji, after the third battle of Panipath. This

led to the forging of a new bond of unity between Hindus and Muslims. They began to believe in the unity of the Godhead. Religious differences were eliminated. If the Muslims proclaimed that Ram was Rahim, the Hindus proclaimed that Satyapir was Satyanarayan. They thus became united in the service of their common motherland. In the coalition cabinet and the joint army Hindus and Muslims cooperated without quarrelling. There was all round prosperity. The English, deprived of their *jaigir* and forts, were allowed to trade on a footing of equality with others.

The sense of national unity expressed in what was supposed to be an imaginary history of India turned out to be a source of inspiration to his secular-minded countrymen eager to unite in the larger interests of India. By asking Hindus and Muslims to rise above their social and religious differences and to become self-reliant in all matters in pursuance of their bounden duty to serve India, Bhudev became one of the initiators of the *swadeshi* era in the country.

DUTIES OF INDIANS

Indians, particularly the Hindus, including the peasants, must learn to fight. Rigidly-defined caste avocations must not be allowed to interfere with the task of building up an army of all castes. The way to this was shown by the Mahrattas. Tanaji Malsree, the conqueror of Singhagarh, once pointed out to the general of Bijapur that the peasants were actually the soldiers of the Mahratta army. The Mahrattas had given up the age-old tradition of allowing the peasants to carry on cultivation undisturbed while their army was engaged in combat. (But the traditional love of the peasants for tranquillity was too deep-rooted to be destroyed all over India by the Mahrattas. That was the reason why it was possible for one Englishman to rule over a huge district in any part of India.)

Bhudev also pointed out that English-educated Indians must cease to imitate Englishmen in manners and customs. They must remember that Englishmen controlled India without abandoning their own manners and customs. They must also not be as exclusive and individualistic as Englishmen were. If they endeavoured to follow English ideals and way of life, then they would only enable the English to strengthen their stranglehold on India. If Cicero had boasted of permanently enslaving Cilicia with the help of 140 Latin schools, the English also could, then, take a similar pride in their means to control India.

Indians must realize that there was no credit in despising their own countrymen who clung to the old way of life. Indian officers, particularly, must learn courtesy. If they could worship clay idols, there was no reason why they could not appreciate virtues in the humblest of their countrymen. To be strong they must love one another, just as Englishmen did.

It was a pity that most of the Indian officers went out of their way to flatter their English superiors to promote their material interests. This was gross selfishness which the English tendentiously fostered among Indians. The English themselves were selfish, and their selfishness, as Bhudev predicted, would one day be the cause of their downfall in India.

If there was anything to learn for Indians from Englishmen, it was the latter's knowledge of science and technology. Bhudev pointed out that English professors in Indian colleges taught only theories of science. What the students needed more was practical work based on laboratory experiments.

Indians also must learn to unite, for without unity their hatred for the English would not be as intense as was necessary to make the latter see reason.

A CRITIC OF GOVERNMENT

Bhudev had no illusions about the fact that the British Government existed in India solely in the interests of Britain. But he was bold enough to point out the necessity of reducing expenditure on the army. He also wanted the abolition of all pensions for idle Nabobs.

The Government, he said, could reduce the weight of financial burden by widening the scope of employment for the Indian agency in administration. Competent Indians should be allowed to fill important positions in administration. The rulers should realize that a large Indian agency would be less expensive than its small European counterpart.

He was a severe critic of the system of indigo plantation in Bengal. The oppressive methods of indigo cultivation imposed upon the ryots by the European planters were graphically described by him in his 'History of Bengal' (3rd Part). European officers were criticized by him for their working in collusion with the greedy and unscrupulous indigo planters. Fortunately, the Germans found out an ersatz for indigo, otherwise the European planters would have continued their oppressive system in India. Bhudev, thus, once pithily

remarked to a European: "The tears of the Bengali ryots have crystallized in the German laboratories".

The distrust of Indians by European officials was a sign of their superiority complex. Sir George Campbell once remarked that Government grants-in-aid were not properly used by the local school committees. To Bhudev the Government's inability to trust school committees with ten or fifteen rupees was insulting. He thus retorted that the British Government's talk of introducing local self-government was all cant in the light of its distrustful attitude. Because of his forthrightness he had to incur the displeasure of Campbell and had to work without getting any promotion for a long time. Bhudev's fault, as Ashley Eden, then Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, pointed out in his letter of 27 April 1873 to Campbell, was that he was a Bengalee, though he carried more weight with the people than all the "Woodrows and Civilian Inspectors put together". Campbell, of course, made no attempt to hide his antipathy for the intellectual qualities of the Bengalees.

To remove mutual distrust between Indian and European officials as well as to create a better understanding between them, Bhudev undertook the task of editing the 'Education Gazette' from 1868. That he did not achieve this purpose was clear from his relations with Campbell.

Bhudev could not also tolerate the pomp and grandeur with which European officials and governors toured the countryside. It all started with Campbell. Halliday, Grant, Beadon and Grey did not encourage it. In the countryside the officials, while travelling, seemed to live off the people, as feudal lords did in medieval Europe. Landlords and Maharajas sometimes had to borrow money to welcome, entertain and feed these visiting European dignitaries—Commissioners, Magistrates, Judges and other small fry, who were unaware how shameful their conduct appeared in the eyes of the intelligent Indians.

Bhudev was also bold enough to criticize the economic exploitation of India by the British. Under their rule India's debts to England constantly increased. More than a quarter of the revenue was sent away to England every year. The general impoverishment of the people was of no concern to them. They monopolized not only all the important offices but also all capital. European tea and indigo planters had emerged in India as rich landlords. Europeans controlled all cotton and jute mills, lac and silk factories, and inland riverine

trade in India. Industrial goods from England threatened indigenous industries with extinction and impelled an increasing number of Indians to become dependent on agriculture.

Bhudev's advice to rich Indians was that they should pool their resources, import foreign machinery and technologists and start joint-stock business. Unless they were enterprising enough in this field of activity, their country would have to face greater ruin.

Bhudev was optimistic enough to believe that India would one day get a great leader, learned, intelligent, self-sacrificing, sympathetic, non-communal and able to make his countrymen participate in the great cooperative endeavour to liberate the motherland. Himself a great man, with virtues which commanded universal respect, he passed away on 15 May 1898.

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RANGALAL BANDYOPADHYAYA

Son of Ramnarayan Bandyopadhyaya, Rangalal Bandyopadhyaya was born in 1827 at Bakulia near Kalna in the district of Burdwan. After receiving preliminary education at the village *pathshala* and the local missionary school, he entered the Hooghly Mohsin College, where he studied till 1843.

He worked as professor of Bengali at the Presidency College for six months in 1860 prior to his appointment, in November the same year, as Income-tax Assessor and Deputy Collector in Nadia. He was made a permanent Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate at Cuttack on 7 February 1867. An honest and efficient officer, he retired on 11 April 1882.

A PATRIOTIC POET

It is essentially as a patriotic poet that Rangalal has left his mark on the history of renascent Bengal. He tried to prove by his

narrative poems that Bengalees, though long enslaved, were not incapable of composing good poetry in their own mother tongue.

What, however, helped him to earn undying fame were the lofty patriotic sentiments he expressed in his poems, *Padmini Upakhyan* (1858), *Karmadevi* (1862) and *Surasundari* (1868). Ideas about self-sacrifice and love of freedom were taken by him from Tod's *Annals of Rajasthan* and used in such a way in his poems on the stirring deeds of some renowned Rajput characters as to inspire his countrymen to brave all hazards while opposing British oppression from 1905. For a long time since the anti-Partition days of 1905 the revolutionaries of Bengal found enough inspiration in those few lines of Rangalal's *Padmini Upakhyan* beginning with the words: "Who wants to live without freedom... Who wants to wear round his legs the chain of slavery...?" (trans.) The climax of this philosophy on patriotism was reached in the words: "There is none like a man who dies for the welfare of his country". (trans.)

His poem, *Karmadevi*, did not fail to prick the conscience of the middle-class Bengalees, who, proud of the little wealth they had acquired through business and Government Service, were envious of one another.

The patriotic *sadhu's* speech in *Karmadevi* was able to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the thinking Bengalees. There was no gainsaying the fact, regretted the *sadhu*, that Indian merchants had impoverished the country by selling all its gold to foreign merchants. Lack of unity and fellow-feeling among the people had contributed no less to India's degradation. The *sadhu* wanted the young to be taught to play, not with dolls which tended to encourage effeminacy in them, but with such things as would help them to become brave, intrepid and always ready for the battlefield in defence of their motherland's interests. The quintessence of his philosophy was that the motherland's freedom, and not riches, was to be worshipped. It entered deep into the hearts of those Bengalees who took upon themselves the task of liberating their motherland by agitational and revolutionary means. Rajput chivalry, Rajput spirit of sacrifice and Rajput love of freedom became inspiring themes in Bengali dramas and poems from the second half of the nineteenth century.

Rangalal realized that without moral strength patriotism would merely be a hollow make-believe for his countrymen. In his poems,

therefore, he made his patriotic Rajput characters breathe a moral strength, which did not fail to be a source of inspiration to the educated people of Bengal. He also taught them, through his couplets published under the title of *Nitikusumanjali*, the necessity of being sympathetic and helpful to one another.

A patriot in his own right and a journalist of no mean repute, having been associated with the 'Sambad Sagara' and 'The Education Gazette', Rangalal Bandyopadhyaya passed away on 13 May 1887.

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KAILASH CHANDRA BASU

Son of Haralal Basu, Kailash Chandra Basu was born in Calcutta in 1827. He had his education first at the primary school of Nabin Madhav De and then at the Oriental Seminary, where the great patriot, Girish Chandra Ghosh, was his classmate. After a brilliant career in school, he joined the Hindu College, but his college studies had to be discontinued in the early forties due to the death of his father.

As he was in straits for money after his father's death, he had to accept a humble clerkship in Messrs. Cockerell & Co. In 1846, he bettered his material prospects by taking up a position under Mr. Hill, Registrar in the office of the Military Accountant-General. In 1854, he was given a more lucrative post in the Bengal Secretariat by Mr. (later Sir) Cecil Beadon, then Secretary to the Bengal Government, who came to form a high opinion of his knowledge of English as well as of his progressive views after listening to his paper, 'The Women of Bengal', read before the Bethune Society. In 1860-61, he worked on promotion as Head Assistant in the Office of the Civil Finance Commission headed by Sir Richard Temple. As a reward for his services he was given, in 1862, another promotion in the Revenue Department, from where he retired as Superintendent of the Money Order Section.

CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL REGENERATION

Kailash Chandra, as stated by Kristo Das Pal, was "one of the sweetest and most fluent public speakers of his time". It was at the debating society of the Oriental Seminary that he learnt the art of debating and of using his reasoning capacity with telling effect. Herman Geffroy, the Headmaster of the Seminary, who often presided over these debates, encouraged his young students, including Kailash Chandra, Girish Chandra Ghosh and his brother Srinath Ghosh, Jadulal Mallick, W. C. Bonnerjee, to take an active interest in the social problems of the day. This great Headmaster, a French barrister turned teacher under pressure of circumstances, not only exercised a liberal influence on his students, but also injected into them his own rational aversion for Hindu superstitions and prejudices, which stood in the way of the mental, material and political progress of their society.

Much later in life, Kailash Chandra also, as a member of the Oriental Seminary's Managing Committee together with Girish Chandra Ghosh, W. C. Bonnerjee and others, encouraged young students to free their minds from all social and religious prejudices, which, apart from making them parochial in outlook, turned them into a clog in the society's wheel of progress.

A staunch advocate of female education, Kailash Chandra was never tired of propagating the idea that there could not be any substantial progress in society as long as women were kept in ignorance. His two papers, 'The Women of Bengal' (1854) and 'On the Education of Females' (14 August 1856), read before the Bethune Society of which he was the Secretary from 1860 until his death, created a stir among the distinguished audience by their boldness of thought and forthright criticism of the social fetters which deprived Hindu society of the tremendous amount of female creative energy in the country. In his paper, 'Domestic Economy of the Hindus' (26 July, 1867), read before the Bengal Social Science Association, with which he was intimately connected as President of its Health Section, he wondered how an art like dancing, which in the past was considered as one of the best accomplishments of a girl, could become an object of social obloquy in Hindu society in the nineteenth century. He stressed the need of training girls in dancing again, in addition to providing them with education. It is of interest to note that Miss Mary Carpenter, who was responsible for the establishment of the Bengal Social Science Association in

1867, highly commended the proposal of Kailash Chandra in her book, 'Six Months in India'. Obviously enough, Kailash Chandra realized that the emancipation of women was necessary for strengthening the moral fibre of society, failing which the achievement of true freedom of any kind would continue to be an *ignis fatuus* for its members. It would do immense good to society if the money wasted on marriages and *sraddh* ceremonies were spent on effecting the social and moral regeneration of the millions of unfortunates in the country.

Known for his charitable disposition and very progressive outlook, Kailash Chandra never missed an opportunity to exhort the rich to loosen their purse-strings in the cause of education for the poor. This was the main theme of his paper, 'Claims of the Poor', read before an enlightened audience, including Keshab Chandra Sen and Girish Chandra Ghosh, at the Uttarpara Charitable Society on 29 April 1866. Essentially an address, the paper very convincingly stressed the imperative need of spreading education for the regeneration and progress of the country. The address was so admirable in style and so excellent in its moral tone that even Col. Malleison, editor of the 'Calcutta Review', praised it in the highest terms.

A staunch patriot but always sensible enough to own the enormity of many Hindu social and religious customs, Kailash Chandra could not stand the blatant preaching of the Christian Gospel by Duff. His attitude, however, was one of informed opposition to proselytization. He not only attended the lectures of Duff on Christianity at the Free Church Institution in 1846, but also, whenever prompted by his conscience, boldly refuted the arguments of the great Christian missionary in order to prove that Hinduism was in no way inferior to other religions. His antipathy to proselytization was brought out in clear relief by the attack he launched upon it in his pamphlet entitled 'Christianity, What is it?'

A polished writer, editing the shortlived monthly magazine 'The Literary Chronicle' from 1849 to 1851 and writing fluently on social and other problems in 'The Bengal Recorder', 'Morning Chronicle', 'Citizen', 'Phoenix', 'Indian Field', 'Hindoo Patriot' and 'Bengalee', Kailash Chandra's modest contribution to shaping the progressive attitude of his countrymen does not admit of any underestimation.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTION

Like many of his educated compatriots, Kailash Chandra also took an active interest in the political problems of the day. It was in his monthly magazine 'The Literary Chronicle' that Girish Chandra wrote the stirring essay on 'The East India Company's Policy', wherein he trenchantly criticized the Britishers' ruthless policy of exploitation. Though the magazine had to be discontinued in 1851, Kailash Chandra's political interest continued to be as active as before. He played an important role in the agitation set on foot in Bengal, on the eve of the renewal of the Charter in 1853, to impress on Parliament the necessity of allowing Indians to join the Covenanted Civil Service as well as the Legislative Council. Dissatisfied with Sir Charles Wood's vague proposal, made on 3 June 1853, for a larger entry of Indians into Government Services, Raja Kalikrishna Bahadur, Raja Pratap Chandra Singha Bahadur, Raja Satyacharan Ghosal Bahadur, Ramgopal Ghosh, Peary Chand Mitra, Debendranath Tagore, Kailash Chandra Basu and others called a public meeting at the Town Hall on 29 July 1853. The meeting was chaired by Raja Radhakanta Deb. Amongst the speakers Kailash Chandra proved very successful. His arguments were as effective and convincing as his approach to the problem that exercised the minds of all. The meeting was subsequently followed by the submission of a petition, which led to the revision of the Charter conceding slightly to Indian demands.

Conscientious and outspoken, respected in all quarters, even by Duff, for his courage of conviction and noble character, Kailash Chandra Basu, the uncle of Narendranath Datta (Vivekananda), died on 18 August 1878.

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NAWAB ABDUL LATIF

A self-made man, known for his progressive outlook and honesty of purpose, Abdul Latif, the second son of Kaji Fakir Muhamed of Rajapur (Faridpur), was born in 1828.

He was educated at the Calcutta Madrasa. His mastery of the English language, the study of which was first introduced in the

Madrasa in the early forties after much controversy, brought him to the notice of the Government. After working for some time first as Private Secretary to the Amir of Sind, a political pensioner living at Dum Dum, and then as teacher both at the Dacca Collegiate School and the Calcutta Madrasa, he was appointed in the Subordinate Executive Service as Deputy Magistrate in 1849. While in Service, he held many important official assignments as a member of the Special Census Committee for Calcutta, as a member of the Board of Examination for the civil and military Services, as a member of the Board of Commissioners appointed to deal with difficulties experienced over the introduction of the income-tax, as a Justice of the Peace in Calcutta and, lastly, as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was also a Fellow of the Calcutta University. For a brief period from 1885 to 1886 he acted as Prime Minister of the Nawab of Bhopal. Before retiring in December 1887 he presided over the Suburban Police Court at Sealdah. Because of his distinguished services to his countrymen and the Government, he was honoured with such titles as the C.I.E., Khan Bahadur and Nawab.

MENTAL AWAKENER

Abdul Latif was one of the first to endeavour to help his co-religionists come out of the mental straitjacket in which they had voluntarily kept themselves confined by their zealous pursuit of Persian and Arabic studies, without caring for the benefits of English education. As a result of their blindly clinging to the traditional forms of study, the Muslims found themselves in the backwaters of the progressive educational movement led by the Hindus.

To combat their apathy and indifference, Abdul Latif, like Derozio, encouraged young Muslims to participate in discussions and debates held in his own house. Here, papers on different subjects were read.

To encourage original thought and enquiry among Muslim students, he offered a prize for the best essay in Persian on the question: 'How far would the inculcation of European sciences through the medium of the English language benefit Muhammedan students in the present circumstances of India and what are the most practicable means of imparting such instruction?' The object of the prize was advertised, with the sanction of the Council of Education, throughout India in the Calcutta Gazette. This object was to draw the attention of the Muslim community to the necessity of its

adapting itself to the requirements of life in new India. Unfortunately, most of the essays deprecated the adoption of English education, quoting the Koran in support of their contention.

Undaunted, Abdul Latif founded the Muhammedan Literary Society in April 1863 at his own private residence to break down the prejudice and exclusiveness of his co-religionists and to interest them in the politics of the time. This Literary Society offered a common platform to representative Muslims to come together. It not only aroused their interest in public affairs, but also gave a new direction to their thought and feeling. As Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, said, the Muhammedan Literary Society gave a successful lead not only to the Muslims of Bengal but also to the Muslims of the whole of India. As a token of approbation of Abdul Latif's effort, Sir John Lawrence presented him with a complete set of the Encyclopaedia Britannica on 25 March 1867.

It was because of Abdul Latif's efforts that an increasing number of Muslim students began to enjoy the fruits of English education at the Presidency College and the Hooghly Mohsin College. On 24 May 1874, he helped Sir Syed Ahmed to establish the Aligarh College, which subsequently became the Aligarh Muslim University.

POLITICAL AWAKENING

Hindu-Muslim solidarity based on mutual tolerance was the keynote of the political attitude of Abdul Latif. As a matter of fact, before Djemel ed Din, the founder of the pan-Islamic movement, arrived in Calcutta for confabulations with the leaders of the Muslim community, Abdul Latif had sincerely cooperated with the Hindus for the advancement of national interests.

While in charge of Kalaroa as Deputy Magistrate, his *perwanna*, which made indigo sowing and taking advances on the part of the ryots optional, led to a widespread strike in the indigo districts of Bengal in 1859-60. Actually, this *perwanna*, for which he was reprimanded and transferred, was based on the 'vernacular note' (*rubakari*, dated 20 February 1859) and the letter (dated 17 August 1859) of Ashley Eden, then Magistrate of Baraset. These not only declared indigo sowing on the part of the ryots optional, but also made it clear that the use of coercion against them by the planters was illegal.

After the death of Harish Chandra Mukherjee, editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot', Abdul Latif voluntarily became a member of the

Committee set up by the British Indian Association to raise funds to perpetuate the memory of this fearless advocate of the rights of the indigo ryots. This was another evidence of his appreciation of the situation created by the oppressive policy of the indigo planters.

Abdul Latif was one of the founders of the Central Muhammedan Association of which Ameer Ali, later a Justice of the Calcutta High Court, was the Secretary. It was under his inspiring leadership that the Central Muhammedan Association joined hands with the Indian Association to make the second National Conference of December 1885 a success. The coming together of the Hindus and Muslims for the promotion of national interests was repugnant to the British rulers. This explains the British policy to divide the Hindus and Muslims into two separate communities, hostile to each other.

Abdul Latif was probably the first to show up how non-progressive was Kaliph Omar's dictum that whatever books differed from the Koran were pernicious and those which agreed with it were superfluous. His attempts to stir the Muslims out of their apathy into political sympathy with the progressive Hindus cannot but be appreciated. Universally respected by his co-religionists, as well as by Hindus and Europeans, he passed away on 18 July 1893.

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BHAGABAN CHANDRA BASU

Father of the famous Indian scientist Acharya Sir Jagadish Chandra Basu, Bhagaban Chandra Basu was born in Bikrampur, Dacca, about 1829. He was the most distinguished scholar of the Dacca College from 1848 to 1852.

He commenced his career as the second teacher at the Comilla Zillah School in February 1852. Later, in October 1853, he was appointed Headmaster of the Mymensingh School. While working zealously as Headmaster, he creditably passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in 1858. On 23 September

of the same year he was appointed Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector at Mymensingh. His perfect knowledge of English and first-rate education gave him great advantage for learning his work. His superior officers always entertained a high opinion of his character and ability. It was only towards the close of his official career, particularly from 1878-79, that he came to be marked as an 'average' officer, probably because of his dilatoriness. He retired from Government service in 1883.

ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Bhagaban Chandra's zeal for the revival of indigenous industries was inspiring to his countrymen. During his posting at Faridpur, he took the initiative in organizing a 'national fair' where indigenous agricultural products were put up for exhibition. To enkindle the interest of the people in things purely Indian, he also arranged for exhibitions of wrestling and physical feats, in addition to *yatras*. Though this fair, however, had no connection with Nabagopal Mitra's *Hindu Mela*, it did not fail to hold up the advantages of self-help and self-reliance before the ordinary people of a small area.

His zeal for economic regeneration seemed to increase with time. At Burdwan he took the initiative in opening an industrial school for imparting vocational training to the poor and helpless. Even music was taught here. He was so much taken up with this cause that he was heedless of the personal expenditure he had to incur over it. Though his zeal for public work of this nature was tauntingly ascribed by his official superior to his "preference for public demonstrations", it remained undiminished in all adverse circumstances of his life.

His belief in self-help, combined with his indomitable spirit of enterprise, prompted him to buy large tracts of land both in the Nepalese Terai and Assam for tea cultivation, an industry which had virtually become a monopoly of Europeans. His tea estate in the Nepalese Terai had to be abandoned because of insalubrious conditions, but the one in Assam became very prosperous after his death. He also invested a huge amount of money in a textile factory in Bombay, but it failed owing to the dishonesty of the local management. This failure, which reduced him to great straits for money, could not, however, dampen his ardour for, and belief in, the cause of the economic regeneration of the country through self-help.

Speaking of his father's failures, Jagadish Chandra Basu said on

4 January 1916: "Few realise that out of the skeletons of myriad lives have been built vast continents. And it is on the wreck of a life like his, and of many such lives, that will be built the greater India yet to be".

ADVOCATE OF FEMALE EDUCATION

A progressive Brahmo, Bhagaban Chandra was an ardent advocate of female education. He gave the best of education to his own daughters, Subarnaprabha, Labanyaprabha, Hemprabha and Charuprabha. He actively helped the *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya* of 1876. He was also one of the sponsors of the *Banga Mahila Samaj* established on 1 August 1879 to enlighten young women on religious, social and domestic problems. Like many others, he firmly believed that without the help of educated and enlightened women social conditions in the country would not improve.

A man of enterprising spirit and of sound, independent judgment, Bhagaban Chandra Basu passed away on 2 August 1892.

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GIRISH CHANDRA GHOSH

Born at Simlah in Calcutta in 1829 and educated at the Oriental Seminary, Girish Chandra Ghosh left school at the age of 16 and entered the Finance Department as a junior clerk. In 1850, he joined the Military Pay Examiner's Office in Calcutta, where he eventually rose to be the Registrar on Rs. 350/- per month.

Journalism was, however, his overriding passion. At the age of 20 he inaugurated the 'Bengal Recorder' (a weekly), which, in 1853, became known as 'The Hindoo Patriot'. He was its editor up to 1856, when the mantle of editorship fell upon the shoulders of an equally brilliant young man, Harish Chandra Mukherjee. Girish Chandra continued to write in it as before, and, in 1861, he started on his own another weekly called 'The Bengalee'. He remained its editor till the last day of his life. His writings were highly appreciated both by Indians and Europeans.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Girish Chandra suggested training for widows as women teachers. He felt that they could easily be turned into a new source of power in Hindu society. As governesses in rich and middle-class families, they would be able to impart a higher moral and intellectual tone to their entire sex.

Girish Chandra was not only a supporter of widow remarriage, but also of female education. He criticized the fear of even the educated Hindus to send their daughters to public school for education. The Bethune School was there to do all it could for educating them. He felt that by purging the School Committee of its conservative elements more girls of Hindu families could be attracted to the institution. Widespread female education was the only way to galvanize the nation and "impart motion to feelings and usages hitherto suffering from chronic paralysis".

THE MUTINY AND EDUCATED INDIANS

The Mutiny of 1857 was tried to be used by European alarmists as a plea to restrict the flow of knowledge to Indians by abolishing schools and colleges. Educated Indians were irritated by it. To Girish Chandra, education was the best guarantee of the social and political order in the State.

When in 1858 the Government, frightened by the shadow of the Mutiny, contemplated the abolition of even the Presidency College, Girish Chandra strongly protested against it. The enhancement of tuition fees of students at the Presidency College generated this fear in the minds of many Indians. Fortunately, the fear did not materialize.

Again, when the Civil Finance Commission of 1861 recommended the abolition of the Krishnagar and Civil Engineering Colleges with a view to curtailing the expenditure incurred by the Education Department, Girish Chandra at once condemned it as a vandalistic suggestion for suppressing knowledge. He could not tolerate the insinuation of the European alarmists that the education received by Young Bengal did not make him happy. He pointed out that if Young Bengal, who could appreciate the genius of Shakespeare and who had read so much about the equality of men, failed to be happy in spite of his education, it was because of his inability to bear the insolence of the Civil Servant and the low-born English merchant. This Young Bengal was also disliked by the *Huzur Babadur*, because

he would not leave his shoes at the door or stoop low when *sallam-ing* his honour, and also because he would not speak in terms of slavish adulation to him. Though willing to show respect to his superior or master, he would not agree to do it in the style of an Eastern slave.

This defender of Young Bengal could not, however, slur over his drinking habit. He not only condemned it, but wanted a well-sustained temperance movement to check it.

Girish Chandra could not tolerate the proselytizing activities of the Christian missionaries. He was repelled by the sight of Christians abusing Hinduism. Hindus, he felt, had nothing to learn from Christians. They were and should be content with the faith of their ancestors.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Like Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Girish Chandra also stirred the political consciousness of his countrymen by drawing their attention to their own political and economic problems as well as by boldly criticizing the policy of the British Government whenever occasion demanded it.

The general strike of the indigo ryots early in 1861 made him take up the cudgels on their behalf. He wrote that anyone who accepted advance money was a doomed man. The brand of the vats was put on his forehead and not even death could release him from this fatal mark. "The Shylocks of the factory pointed to the letter of the bond and whetted their knives upon their soles". And Halliday, he said, had rendered everything smooth between the victim and the executioner.

But the oppressed ryots passed from the stage of passive resistance to open defiance. This made the proud oppressors panic-stricken. They sought the help of the Planters' Association in Calcutta, of Belvedere and of troops. The ryots' refusal to work was treated as a sign of rebellion.

Nothing could, however, intimidate the ryots into obedience. "Not a spade was thrust into the soil in the cause of the dye. Not a bucket was dipped into the stream to water an indigo plant. The strike was universal and complete. For once Bengalees had united, and not even cannon balls could break the cohesion. . . . They went into prisons by thousands and by tens of thousands. . . . It was at all events a refuge from the godowns. . . ."

Girish Chandra was bold enough to point out that the indigo system would have long ago gone out of existence if the Civil Servants were less corrupt. In fact, it was the district administrators who had helped the perpetuation of the miseries of the ryots. He, however, did not fail to appreciate the goodness of Sir John Peter Grant and W. S. Seton-Karr, who, more than anyone else, had done much to help the ryots break the fetters forged round their legs by the rapacious planters. It was because of the results of their efforts that the ryots could enforce their rights through fearless and lawful representation. "Ruin soon overtook the inflictors of ruin", gleefully commented Girish Chandra.

The climax of the indigo trouble was reached in July 1861 when the enraged planters dragged the Rev. James Long for trial in the Court of Justice Sir Mordaunt Wells. In the eyes of Girish Chandra, it was actually the Government that was on trial, and not the Rev. James Long with whom the whole nation sympathized.

It was because of this farcical trial, at which the jurors behaved like dumb-driven cattle, that Girish Chandra condemned the jury system as a relic of medieval barbarism. After comparing the judicial prosecution of Long to the judicial murder of Nandakumar, he pointed out that the jury in the former's case was virtually dictated to and guided by the extraordinary summing-up of Justice Wells. In Calcutta, he said, juries received their opinions from "Lazarus the Cabinet-maker". Though a democratic institution, it ceased to mean anything to Girish Chandra because of its misuse in the Supreme Court and elsewhere.

Girish Chandra was also a ruthless critic of discrimination in judicial matters. He could not tolerate the cry of "Black Act" raised by the non-official Europeans against Sir Barnes Peacock's Bill of 1857 which tried to take away from them their supposed rights of immunity. Indians felt very irritated when Europeans held a meeting on 14 February 1857 and accused Indian judges of corruption. Attacking their vituperative propaganda, Girish Chandra wrote: "The mock-heroic Billingsgate of that prince of political and literary imposters, Thomas Babington Macaulay, against the natives of a country whose chief guilt seems to have been to have given him a fortune, was reproduced over and over in the newspapers". History, humanity, the law of progress and the Bible were all forgotten in their sweeping condemnation of Indians. The Sepoy Mutiny was a godsend to them. Girish Chandra argued that the fabric of Indian Government

was being rebuilt on the model of England. Every governmental institution in India was being given an English complexion. In the light of this policy European opposition to the introduction of the English doctrine of equality of every subject before the law was, therefore, meaningless. To abandon it was "to humour a prejudice and uphold Vanity Fair!" But in spite of the "White Act" agitation led by Radhakanta Deb and others, the Bill was withdrawn by Peacock under pressure of the "Brahmins of creation who, sticking to colour and pedigree, maintained that they could not be tried for a criminal offence by any officer who tried a black native". This was how, lamented Girish Chandra, justice came to be crucified with worse than Jewish spite by "the pioneers of civilization".

The wanton severity of the rulers, particularly of the non-official Europeans, during and after the Mutiny was roundly condemned by the young journalist. That it led to racial antagonism between Europeans and Indians was pointed out by him on more than one occasion. He severely criticized the order of the Joint Magistrate of the Agra Cantonment, which laid down that Indians would be liable to arrest and punishment if they failed to salute or show proper respect to the *Sahiblogues* and *Gorahs* on meeting them in the public thoroughfares.

He thus angrily wrote that it was orders of this kind that bred such rebels as executed the commands of Nana Sahib. To him, the magnanimity and loftiness of a nation consisted not in race hauteur and ungenerous display of power, but in a dignified communication with the less fortunate nation with a view to inducing the latter "to a better course of social life, morality and independence".

If Girish Chandra was not afraid to condemn "the political crime and moral infatuations of the most unpopular Governor-General", viz., Lord Dalhousie, he was also not afraid to criticize Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who left for the hills at a time when famine was stalking the country in 1866. His supine inactivity and indifference in a calamity, for which he was asked to resign, came to be exposed in Girish Chandra's article published in 'The Bengalee' of 4 August 1866. It made the Government of India sit up and take a serious view of the situation. It led to the appointment of a Famine Commission.

A critic of the Permanent Settlement, a true friend of the ryots, a foe of injustice, the denouncer of the wantonness of European offenders against the law of the land, Girish Chandra Ghosh, who

cut for himself a niche in the hearts of his countrymen by his outspokenness and patriotism, died prematurely on 20 September 1869.

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DINABANDHU MITRA

Dinabandhu Mitra, son of Kalachand Mitra, was born in 1830 at Chowberia in the district of Nadia. He received his education at the Hare School and the Hindu College. In spite of his admirable performance at every examination, he gave up his studies in 1855, when he was in the First Class of the College, and joined Government service as Postmaster at Patna. Within a year and a half he became the Postal Inspector of the Orissa Division. Subsequently, he was transferred to different places of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam before being posted as Supernumerary Inspector of the Calcutta Post Office. He was, however, unfortunate enough to be shunted off to the East Indian Railway as Inspector because of his siding with Mr. Tweedie, the Postmaster-General, in the latter's quarrel with Mr. Hogg, the Director-General. Though he was made a 'Rai Bahadur' for his distinguished services during the Lushai War in 1871, he did not receive proper recognition of his efficiency, honesty and perseverance from the British Government. This was a cause of great regret to his countrymen, who looked upon him as "the nation's idol".

HIS PATRIOTISM

Though he worked under the British Government, he could not tolerate the oppression practised upon the poor and helpless ryots by the powerful and rapacious European indigo planters. The Indigo Commission set up by Sir John Peter Grant, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, under Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr investigated into the vexed problem and suggested measures which the European planters treated with contempt. Harish Chandra Mukherjee, the bold editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot', had, before his death on 14 June 1861, untiringly persevered with his pen to make the Government aware of the ineffable sufferings of the ryots at the hands of the European indigo

planters. His efforts were fortified by Dinabandhu Mitra, who was as much agitated as any other patriotic Indian over the miserable condition of the indigo ryots. He gave vent to his feelings in his famous drama, *Nil Darpan*, which was published under a pseudonym at Dacca in September 1860. In his preface to the drama he asked the European planters to see their faces in the mirror and feel persuaded to abandon their ruthless exploitation which had besmirched the fair name of England. They were also asked to disgorge their ill-gotten gains and be fair to the downtrodden ryots.

No fear, not even the fact that his European superiors in the Postal Department were friends of the indigo planters, could contain the patriotic fervour with which he had his *Nil Darpan* published in 1860. The educated Indian gentry sat up and read the drama only to be overwhelmed by a feeling of revulsion against the ruthless exploiters. There were descriptions of the pitiable condition of the ryots in Peary Chand Mitra's *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (1858), but these appeared perfunctory in comparison to those of Dinabandhu Mitra. The powerful pathos of the drama overwhelmed some European souls also when its English rendering, done by Michael Madhusudan Dutt, was brought out by the Rev. James Long with the secret assistance of Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr in 1861. This English rendering, entitled 'Nil Durpun or the Indigo planting Mirror', created a furore and led to the trial of Long in July 1861. Though punished by Sir Mordaunt Wells, a biased Judge of the Supreme Court, Long came to be lionized by the enraged Hindus. He succeeded in stinging the conscience of the British Government and in accelerating the liquidation of the European planters' system of exploitation. This was as much his victory as it was of demure Dinabandhu and all the young and aged patriots who rallied in the courtyard of the residence of Radhakanta Deb to condemn the action of Justice Sir Mordaunt Wells.

In this atmosphere surcharged with feelings a new spirit—a bolder spirit—steadily grew up. Distinctly tinged with a sense of nationalism, it began to spread with the dramatization of Dinabandhu's *Nil Darpan* at the National Theatre on 7 December 1872. The patriot had done his job, and it had been well done.

To what extent Dinabandhu identified himself with the political interests of his countrymen could be made out from the brilliant speech he delivered at Krishnagar in August 1862, eulogizing the services of the late Harish Chandra Mukherjee to his motherland.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

No less acute was Dinabandhu's solicitude for the social welfare of his countrymen. Though he did not take an active part in the social regeneration movement like Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, he, nevertheless, did much to disseminate the latter's progressive views through his dramas full of pungent humour and sarcasm. If he emerged as a supporter of widow remarriage in his poem *Suradhani Kavya* as well as in his letter published in the 'Sambad Prabhakar' of 22 February 1856, he appeared as a vigorous denouncer of *kulinism* and polygamy in his *Jamai Barik*. The sarcastic vein in which he pilloried, in his *Sadhavar Ekadashi*, the English-educated Bengalees for drinking hard and aping Western manners in the backdrop of their neglected wives did not fail to prick the conscience of his countrymen.

The dedication of *Anandamath* by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya to Dinabandhu shows the high esteem in which the latter was held in the country. His influence over renascent Bengal proved enduring. His premature death, at the age of 43, on 1 November 1873 was universally mourned in the country.

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MANOMOHAN BASU

A poet, dramatist and journalist, Manomohan Basu, son of Debnarayan Basu, was born in his maternal uncle's house at Nischintapur in Jessore on 14 July 1831. Educated at the Hare School and the General Assembly's Institution, he took to journalism in Calcutta very early in life. The journals he edited were the *Sambad Bibhakar* and the *Madhyastha*. He soon made his mark as a poet and dramatist

as well. Because of his contributions to the vernacular literature, he was made, towards the end of his life, a member of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, of which he was also for some time the Vice-President.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Manomohan was one of those who supplied the motive force to the *Chaitra* or *Hindu Mela*, which became an annual national festival since 12 April 1867 under the able guidance of Nabagopal Mitra. It was thoroughly an Indian (*Swadeshi*) movement free from all English influence. Manomohan was invited as the chief speaker at the second, third and fifth sessions of the *Mela*.

At the second session in 1868, he told the great National Gathering that they had come there to buy the seed of unity, which, if properly sown and watered, was bound to grow into a huge tree capable of yielding in time the fruit of freedom. Self-reliance, he emphasized, offered the way to unity and freedom, and this self-reliance could be promoted by encouraging Indian artisans to produce, in a competitive spirit, better types of indigenous products, both agricultural and industrial, for display at the *Mela*.

In his speeches at the *Mela* he emerged as a forthright denouncer of the economic exploitation of India by the British. In 1869, he condemned the Government for levying more and more taxes from the people, not sparing even such a common commodity as salt. He gave a vivid description of this exploitation in his novel, *Bangadheep-Parajaya*, in which was included his famous national song beginning with the line, *Diner din, sabe deen Bharat haye paradheen* (enslaved India becomes poorer in everything day by day). The song described the conquest of Bengal by a foreign people who came from a high island on the sea called Tungadeep. The weaver and the blacksmith cried day and night because they could not find food by plying their trade. It was a matter of regret that Indians had become dependent on their foreign masters for the most trifling things—thread, needles, match-sticks, clothes, domestic utensils, oil for lighting their lamps, etc. And as for the cruel foreign masters, they had come like locusts to eat up all the corn, leaving only the husks for the starving people.

Manomohan wanted progress to be the watchword in every department of national life. Addressing the district *Mela* at Baruiipur, he said that Hindus should worship the Goddess Durga with ten hands, each of which held the key of success in regard to agriculture,

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Manomohan wanted progress to be the watchword in every department of national life. Addressing the district *Mela* at Baruipur, he said that Hindus should worship the Goddess Durga with ten hands, each of which held the key of success in regard to agriculture,

gardening, commerce, industry, physical exercise, social regeneration, self-reliance, intellectual awakening, competition and national unity. Unity was the weapon, he emphasized, most necessary for killing the demon of foreign control.

His great love for his country was also expressed in his poem entitled *Janmabhumi*, wherein he described the land of his birth as the best place on earth.

He called upon the rich to come forward and cooperate with others, in a patriotic spirit, to make the country self-reliant and free.

To promote a feeling of nationalism, he joined the common endeavour to make the National Theatre, established under the influence of the *Hindu Mela* in December 1872, a success. Some of his dramas were staged here.

In his shortlived journal, *Madhyastha*, launched on 13 April 1872, he advocated the idea of his countrymen going cautiously ahead towards the goal of freedom. Introduction of reforms in a doctrinaire manner was bound to be harmful to society.

A staunch nationalist, Manomohan Basu was also one of the founder-members of the Indian League established on 25 September 1875.

He passed away on 4 February 1912 at the ripe old age of 81.

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MAHENDRA LAL SIRCAR

Son of Taraknath Sircar, Mahendra Lal Sircar was born in a village in Howrah on 2 November 1833. He lost his father while very young and was, thus, looked after by his maternal uncles. He entered the Colootola Branch School (later known as Hare School) at the age of 7 and soon made his mark as a brilliant student. His career at the Hindu College (called Presidency College from 15 June 1855) was also equally distinguished. He was a senior scholarship holder from 1853 to 1855. After receiving a sound general education he entered the Calcutta Medical College, from where he

took the L.M.S. degree in 1861, with the highest distinction in medicine, surgery and midwifery. In 1863, he obtained the M.D. degree. But in spite of his unsurpassing knowledge and experience of allopathic treatment, he became a homoeopathic practitioner in 1867, boldly facing the criticism of both European and Indian medical men in Calcutta.

He was for three years the Secretary of the Bengal Branch of the British Medical Association before becoming its Vice-President. 'The Calcutta Journal of Medicine', started and edited by him from 1869, brought him into the limelight as an eager inquirer in the field of science and medicine. A Fellow of the Calcutta University since 1870, an honorary Magistrate from 1872 to 1902, a member of the Legislative Council from 1887 to 1893 and the Sheriff of Calcutta in 1887, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar was held in high esteem in both official and unofficial quarters. If the Government honoured him with the C.I.E., the University of Calcutta did not lag far behind in honouring him with the LL.D. degree (*honoris causa*). The Calcutta Public Library, of which he was the Vice-President in 1876, owes much of its improvement to his efforts.

PROMOTER OF VERNACULAR

In his minute of 2 October 1877, he opposed the abolition of Sanskrit from the course of the First Arts. He held that the study of Sanskrit was necessary in colleges, because it was the mother of all Indian vernaculars. He believed that the education of those who did not study it would remain "incomplete and useless". An acquaintance with Sanskrit, the parent language, would help students to improve their knowledge of Bengali or any other vernacular, through the medium of which they could effectively spread their knowledge of Western literature and science among the masses.

PROMOTER OF THE SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

Mahendra Lal tried to create a critical and inquiring spirit through the activities of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, established by him on 29 July 1876 with the help and patronage of Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Many Indians ungrudgingly offered him their assistance in this matter. The main object of the Association was to provide lectures of a high standard in science, especially in General Physics, Chemistry and Geology, for students who had attained some proficiency in these

subjects. Their practical application came to be emphasized very much in these lectures.

In June 1881, the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, however, advised Mahendra Lal to spread scientific knowledge among his countrymen in the vernacular, because it might help the common folk to understand and apply this knowledge to agriculture and other industries.

SOCIAL REFORM

Mahendra Lal played a big role in getting the marriageable ages of boys and girls fixed under Marriage Act III of 1872. His suggestion that the marriageable age of girls should be fixed at 16 was accepted by the Government. It pleased Keshab Chandra Sen also. Early marriage, according to Mahendra Lal, not only led to domestic complications but was positively injurious to society.

POLITICAL AWARENESS

Mahendra Lal was elected President of the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Calcutta from 25 to 27 October 1888. These provincial conferences "were tributary streams which flowed on to swell the great volume of the Congress movement." The Conference of 1888 advocated the cause of the labourers in the tea-gardens of Assam. Mahendra Lal not only supported the resolution condemning the exploitation of tea-garden labourers, but also the members' antipathy for the application of the derogatory term 'coolie' to those of the labouring class in India.

His active participation in the agitation against the Jury Notification of 20 October 1892, which virtually abolished the jury system in Bengal, considerably stirred the political consciousness of the people. With Jadulal Mallick and several others, he condemned the Government measure at the memorable Town Hall meeting of 20 November 1892, presided over by Durga Charan Laha. A petition was sent to Parliament. Ultimately under the pressure of public opinion the Government set up the Prinsep Commission, which recommended, in March 1893, the restoration of the jury system in Bengal.

Well known for his sympathy, humanity and philanthropy, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar passed away on 23 February 1904.

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scences and Anecdotes of Great Men of India (Part I, 1894); Surendranath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (1925); *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra* (Vol. II, 1962); *Weekly Report of Native Papers* (Part II, 1892).

HARINATH MAJUMDAR

A champion of the rights of mute peasants, Harinath Majumdar is an exemplary character in the history of renascent Bengal. Born to poverty and living in penury throughout his life, this very earthly saint, universally known as *Kangal* (pauper) Harinath, was a rare combination of the qualities of self-help, forthrightness and indomitable spirit.

Son of Haladhar Majumdar, Harinath was born in 1833 at Kumarkhali in Nadia. He lost his parents in his childhood. He read for a short while at Krishnadhan Majumdar's English school, but had to give up his studies owing to his inability to pay the school fees. However, gifted as he was with a sharp intellect as well as with a mind that constantly thirsted for knowledge and sought the Truth, he had himself educated through unremitting personal endeavour.

MENTAL AWAKENER

Though handicapped financially, his restless mind cast about for means to educate the children of Kumarkhali so that they could grow into healthy and useful members of society. Removal of ignorance was the basic need. Thus, with the aid of Gopal Chandra Kundu, Jadav Chandra Kundu and Gopal Chandra Sanyal, he had a vernacular school opened at Kumarkhali on 13 January 1855. He set an example of selfless service by choosing to be an honorary teacher at the school. It was only when the roll strength of the school increased as a result of the very good performance of its students at the primary examinations that he agreed to accept the sum of Rs. 11/- as his monthly salary. Though it was later increased to Rs. 20/- per month, he accepted Rs. 15/- only, contributing the remaining amount towards the salaries of the lesser paid teachers. His service to the school was appreciated both by the public and the Government.

Fearless of social obloquy and convinced of the need of educating girls, he openly supported the girls' school established by Krishna Majumdar at Kumarkhali on 23 December 1856. While inculcating

upon women the moral values of life in his book *Bijoy Basanta*, he felt no hesitation in telling them that every virtuous wife had the right to separate herself from her licentious husband.

DEFENDER OF THE OPPRESSED

Harinath took to journalism, not to make money, but to ventilate the grievances of the poor and mute peasants of Kumarkhali oppressed equally by the local zamindar, money-lenders, European indigo planters and British soldiers. He first started writing about this oppression in the *Sambad Prabhakar*. Later, from April 1863, he brought out a monthly, *Grambartaprabesika*, to make articulate the stifled voice of the peasants. This journal subsequently became a fortnightly and the latter again a one-pice weekly called *Gram-barta* from April 1870. It published articles on literature, philosophy and science, but what gave it special distinction was the fiery writings of Harinath on the sufferings of the oppressed peasants. His graphic and truthful accounts of the enormities of the village zamindar and the indigo planters made Kumarkhali the focal-point of public attention for a long time.

Under his withering criticism the local zamindar squirmed and the European District Magistrate felt uneasy. The Magistrate's warning or the zamindar's threat of physical assault could not intimidate him into abandoning the cause he had long championed with zeal. He pointed out to the Magistrate that he would continue to serve the peasants in the same spirit in which he would serve his parents until the oppression complained of was ended. He could not stand the rank hypocrisy of European planters. To pray in Church and then to shoe the innocent peasants in the countryside was a wanton crime on the part of these planters, which, he felt, could not be concealed any longer.

'Pauper' Harinath, resolute, as ever to keep his journal going, became its editor, news-reporter, distributor, collector of subscriptions and treasurer. Though he was financially helped by Rajiblochan Majumdar to buy a press in Calcutta in 1873, his own material position remained as precarious as before. But his influence was so widespread that he was virtually the king of Kumarkhali.

PROMOTER OF THE BENGALI LANGUAGE

It was one of his avowed purposes to promote the use and development of the Bengali language and its literature through his

journals, books and devotional songs (*baul*). In the field of Bengali literature he left worthy disciples in Akshay Kumar Maitra, Dinendranath Roy, Jaladhar Sen (his biographer), Sibchandra Vidyarnav and a few others.

An embodiment of soul-force, a model of self-help and perseverance in the face of tremendous odds, a patriot noted for his nobility of thought and deed as well as for his selfless devotion to service, Harinath Majumdar died on 16 April 1896.

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DWARAKANATH MITRA

"He had lived to make his countrymen proud of the Hindoo name"—this is what was said of Mr. Justice Dwarakanath Mitra after he had passed away in 1874 to the grief of his educated countrymen, endeavouring to prove that they were in no way inferior to the British rulers.

Son of Harachandra Mitra, a Muktear of the Hooghly Court, Dwarakanath Mitra was born at Agunsi in the 24-Parganas in 1833. He had his education at the Hooghly Branch School, the Hooghly Collegiate School and the Hooghly College. A brilliant scholar, his performance in all examinations, including the tough Library Examination of 1855, won him not only scholarships and the highest prizes, but also the unqualified appreciation of his European and Indian teachers, as well as of the Council of Education. Keen on carving out an independent career for himself, he entered the Presidency College to study Law. But he soon left the College as Principal Sutcliffe refused to permit him to appear at the first Diploma Examination in Law of 1857. Though in great straits for money since his father's death, he made bold to prepare in private for the last examination of the Law Committee to be held in January 1856. Dwarakanath, who was the youngest examinee, acquitted himself so well at the examination as to surprise both his examiners and elders.

He joined the bar of the Sadar Diwani Court as pleader in March 1856 and soon rose to prominence under the benign guidance

of Sambhunath Pandit and Ramaprasad Roy. His deep legal knowledge, his penetrating and analytical mind, his amazingly retentive memory, his capacity to undertake research on any baffling case needing convincing precedents, his surprising command of the English language which he expressed with a readiness, precision and force unequalled at the bar, and, lastly, his honesty in professional dealings, all this helped his meteoric rise to the Bench of the Calcutta High Court in 1867, when he was only 34 years of age. He not only ably wore the mantle of Mr. Justice Sambhunath Pandit, who died on 6 June 1867, but also commanded respect from his European colleagues on the Bench, including Chief Justice Sir Barnes Peacock, by his learned and irrefutable judgements.

EXEMPLARY SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

Though averse to a clerical role, Dwarakanath was forced by straitened circumstances, while preparing for the Law Committee's examination, to accept one on Rs. 100 per month in the Court of the Police Magistrate, Kissory Chand Mitra. But, despite his great need for money, he gave up the post after a month and eight days, because of his inability either to adapt himself to the degrading atmosphere of the Police Court or to put up with the cold, indifferent attitude of Kissory Chandra Mitra. His painful experience in the Police Court only steeled his resolve to follow an independent profession wherein he could escape slights and insults from persons given to self-glorification.

As he became a Judge of the High Court on his own merit, he never felt inclined to flatter either his European colleagues on the Bench or the British Government. On the contrary, Chief Justice Sir Barnes Peacock not unoften revised his judgements on difficult cases after consulting Dwarakanath. It is said that Sir George Campbell, who was for some time Dwarakanath's colleague on the High Court Bench, cold-shouldered him after becoming the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Brave Dwarakanath became a hero in the eyes of his countrymen by offering an equally cold shoulder to the Lieutenant-Governor, who was noted for his animosity towards all educated Bengalees.

FRIEND OF THE RYOTS

Dwarakanath's intimacy with Harish Chandra Mukherjee turned him into a genuine friend of the ryots. He rushed to their

rescue when their land-rent began to be raised by landlords, including the indigo planters, under Sections 5 and 17 of Act X of 1859. Mr. Hill, a European indigo planter of Nadia, wanted to make good the loss he had suffered on account of the ryots' strike by increasing the rent of a bigah of land from 5 annas 8 pies to Re. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$. His tenant, Iswar Ghosh, filed a suit against this increase in the court of the Additional District Judge of Nadia. After losing the case there, he appealed to the High Court in September 1862. The High Court's judgment also went against him. As a matter of fact, many such suits were filed by the tenants, but they lost everywhere. In June 1865, Dwarakanath took up the case of Thakurani Dasi who had appealed to the High Court after losing her case against her zamindar, Bisweswar Mukhopadhyaya, in the lower court. R. V. Doyne and Woodroffe, both reputed European barristers, appeared on behalf of the zamindars and the planters, while Thakurani Dasi was represented by Dwarakanath, who took no fees for his arduous labour. To hear his learned pleading, which continued for seven days, even members of the Viceroy's Council regularly attended the High Court, not to speak of patriotic-minded Indians. Ultimately, the full Bench, including Sir Barnes Peacock who had earlier upheld the contention of the zamindars, gave a verdict in favour of Thakurani Dasi, convinced as they were by the arguments of Dwarakanath. By winning this crucial case he not only helped the poor tenants to escape the burden of higher rent, but also added to the racial pride of educated Bengalees.

MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Before he became a member of the Bench, he, together with Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, conceived the idea of forming a middle-class political organization to be called the Bengal Association. Because of the proposed body's circumscribed scope of activity, it did not meet with the approval of Surendranath Banerjea and his friends, who, in pursuit of their desire to form an all-India middle-class political organization, established the Indian Association on 26 July 1876.

A PROMOTER OF SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY

Dwarakanath was an admirer of the great positivist, Auguste Comte. He wanted all students of Law to read Comte's works in order to develop their power of analysis and reasoning.

To promote the spirit of scientific enquiry among his countrymen, he donated Rs. 4,000 to Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar's Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.

A positivist, Dwarakanath always believed that true religion lay in helping others, particularly the helpless and the needy. His genuine sympathy for deserving causes and institutions, in addition to his considerable legal acquirements, made him an object of admiration among his countrymen. His death on 25 February 1874 was universally mourned in the country.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA

The biggest challenge to the spiritual enslavement of the English-educated Indians in the nineteenth century came from a seemingly illiterate Bengali priest, reverentially called Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, a name that has long become "the common property of mankind".

Son of Kshudiram Chattopadhyaya, Sri Ramakrishna, named Gadadhar after his birth, was born on 17 February 1836 at Kamarpukur in the Hooghly district. Because of his strong religious bent of mind as well as his thirst for spiritual knowledge, he found no interest in the traditional form of school learning. At the age of twenty-one he was appointed a priest in the Dakshineswar Kali Temple established by Rani Rashmoni on 31 May 1855. His selfless devotion to the worship of Mother Kali soon helped him to realize the Absolute, which has for ages been the final aim of the unremitting endeavour of every genuine *sadhu* in India. Those who helped him in his realization of both God and the Absolute—the One Formless—were a *Bhairabi* and a *yogi* named Totapuri. His was "the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people", says his biographer M. Romain Rolland, and his super-conscious mind never ceased to excite the incredulous astonishment of his devotees.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

His contribution towards improving the moral tone of society, at a time when the influence of English education and missionary proselytization had considerably undermined the faith of the English-educated Hindus in their own religion and in the values of their own culture, is inestimable. By presenting to the believers, waverers and scoffers the highest wisdom of the ancient sages, together with the difficult teachings of the Upanishads and the Vedanta, in a language which was as simple and lucid in style as it was rich in telling similes and metaphors, he not only revived their faith in the cardinal values of Hindu culture, but also revived Hinduism in such a way as to turn it into a huge magnet exercising an irresistible attraction for them all, including the Brahmos.

To scoffers and waverers he made liberalized Hinduism, without its divisive caste system and sacerdotal inhibitions, appear as a high way of life open to all; to sinners, as the surest means of receiving the grace and mercy of God; and to all in general, as the most unerring way to redemption and salvation. The *Bhaktiyoga*, with its emphasis on ritual-less praying to God with faith, was recommended by him to all for their moral regeneration. It was best suited to the needs of the age.

In his discourses on man and religion he visualized a society where women were given a high and honourable position. This was done in ancient times. That apart, it would be a society where men might learn to help and serve one another selflessly. Since "the living is God" (*Jiva is Siva*), any selfless service done to man in society was selfless service to God. Such service was bound to unite Indians in a strong bond of brotherhood. This message of service was not preached in vain, for under the inspiring and dedicated leadership of his greatest disciple, Swami Vivekananda, it became a flesh-and-blood reality, radiating an ennobling influence to the remotest corners of India. From the national point of view no better means could have been suggested or employed for the regeneration of decadent society.

The true spirit of India, kept submerged in a mass of worthless excrescences (all rituals and customs sanctioned by *Smriti* legislations over the ages), was salvaged by him and placed before his misguided countrymen as a pure gem. This spirit was present in every Hindu, and all that he had to do to discover it was to make an effort like the tiger-cub which realized its true nature in spite of being reared

for some time together with lambs. This spirit was the spirit of tolerance, of the courageous pursuit of Truth and of service to fellow-beings. Sri Ramakrishna himself was the living embodiment of this spirit, before which even Brahmo stalwarts, like Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen, Pratap Chandra Majumdar, Pandit Sivanath Sastri, Krishna Kumar Mitra and a host of others, bowed their heads in deep reverence. Even Narendranath Datta, who for some time saw no better means to quench his spiritual thirst other than at "the refined springs of Brahmo theism" and who first approached the great Master with a rationally theistic mind, ultimately surrendered himself to him. His doubts, as also those of many others who had long scratched only the surface of Hinduism and had occasionally looked to the West for spiritual sustenance, were set at rest by the stream of unimpeachable wisdom that flowed from Sri Ramakrishna's lips. Rightly has M. Romain Rolland commented on Narendranath's conversion: "Thus at the feet of the simple Ramakrishna, the most intellectual, the most imperious, the most justly proud of all the great religious spirits of modern India humbled himself".

UNIVERSALISM OF RELIGION

His personal realization of the unity of the Godhead gave a convincing ring to his preaching this Vedantic principle. When he narrated his spiritual experiences to prove that "truth is one, though sages call it by different names" (*Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti*), his disciples and Brahmo listeners felt themselves elevated to an inspiring height of unity, which augured well for the country. He had seriously practised Hinduism, Islam and Christianity and had followed the paths of the different Hindu sects only to realize that all religions ultimately led to the same God. Religion, like God, is always one, its forms only being different. Thus it pained him to see men quarrelling in the name of religion—the Hindus, Muslims, Brahmos, Vaishnavas and the rest. They never reflected that "He who is called Krishna is also called Siva, and bears the name of Primitive Energy (Sakti), Jesus and Allah as well—the same Rama with a thousand names". To elaborate his point further, he said that the *jala* of the Hindus was the same as the 'water' of the Christians or the *pani* of the Muslims, which might be drawn by them from three different *ghats* of the same tank. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to think that these words signified three different substances! The universalism of religion would be denied only by

ignorant minds. Thus his advice to everyone was that he should follow his own path, without ever trying to knock others out of theirs under the influence of irrational fanaticism.

By unfolding the spirit of eclecticism and of unity that lay hidden within the bosom of Hinduism, he contributed much towards liberalizing all communal and sectarian views in the country. The exposition of the Upanishadic truths was a source of inspiration to renascent Bengal as well as to all broadminded men striving for India's regeneration and freedom. Not in Dayanand's hostility to Christianity and Islam but in Sri Ramakrishna's spirit of catholicity and universal brotherhood that liberal and stout hearts found the strength to strive for the attainment of national unity.

It was because of his synthetic vision of Hinduism that Sri Ramakrishna never felt the necessity of creating any new cult round his teachings. It was not either done by his ardent disciples.

Sri Ramakrishna's life, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "was a living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads". The fact that he was a *Dvaita*, a *Visishtadvaita* and an *Advaita* shows how comprehensive was his spiritual experience and his realization of God and of the One Formless. The Sedition Committee Report of 1918 refers to his *Sakti* worship, which later became a source of inspiration to the revolutionaries of Bengal. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who resuscitated the pride of his countrymen in Hinduism, passed away on 15 August 1886.

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BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAYA

The brightest luminary in the firmament of renascent Bengal, a name to conjure with in the history of Bengali literature and the high priest of nationalism in India, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya was the herald of the new spirit markedly bolder than the one intro-

duced in society by Rammohun Roy. His broad humanism was combined with his rational spirit of enquiry and bold espousal of the cause of social and political regeneration to make his life and thought the watershed between the moderate nationalism of Rammohun Roy and the articulate and vigorous nationalism of Surendranath Banerjea, Bipin Chandra Pal and Sri Aurobindo. To his assimilative and highly analytical mind the cultural heritage of India was as much a food for nourishment as the political philosophy of the West, and vigorous ideas from both were admirably bent by him to serve one single purpose—the cause of nationalism in the country.

The third son of Jadav Chandra Chattopadhyaya, a Deputy Collector, Bankim Chandra was born at Kantalpara on 26 June 1836. A talented and brilliant student first of the Hooghly Mohsin College (1849-56) and then of the Law Department of the Presidency College (1856-58), Bankim Chandra passed the Entrance Examination in 1857 and the B.A. Examination in 1858. He enjoys the reputation of being one of the only two graduates passing out in 1858 from the Calcutta University. It was, however, in 1869, when he had already become an experienced officer of the Subordinate Executive Service, that he passed the B.L. Examination.

He had to discontinue his Law studies after graduation because of his appointment as a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector at Jessore on 6 August 1858 (Bengal Judicial Proceeding, No. 348, 12 August 1858). He was in the Subordinate Executive Service for 33 years, and the Character Book of this Service (Part II) shows how genuinely appreciative his European superiors were of his talents, zeal, sound judgment, competence, firmness, command of English, accuracy and personal activity. He was "decidedly the cleverest and the best" and his proven competence entitled him, as stated in the Report for 1861, "to high praise and to the first place among the uncovenanted officers exercising police powers" in Jessore. Probably because of ill-health, he became "at times a little eccentric" from 1883 and was marked 'average' for the first time in the Report for 1885-86. He retired from Government Service on 14 September 1891, with such honours as Rai Bahadur and the C.I.E.

HIS SENSE OF SELF-RESPECT

Bankim Chandra was always too conscious of his self-respect to compromise it in order to ingratiate himself with his European

superiors for a consideration. His awareness of the fact that he occupied a respectable position in the Service by dint of his own merit fortified his sense of self-respect. His quarrel with Buckland over some judicial decisions in 1881 and his quarrel with the District Magistrate of Howrah in 1883, which might have undermined his position in their eyes, showed not merely his confidence in his ability but also his independence of mind, which often jibbed at the restraints imposed by the conditions of Service. This was the reason why he considered Government Service the greatest misfortune of his life.

Nothing was more loathsome to him than the thought of cringing before English bullies, whose number had multiplied in India after the Mutiny. On 15 December 1873, he was assaulted by one Lt-Col. Duffin of the Berhampore Cantonment for no other offence than being audacious enough to cross in a *palkee* the cricket ground where some Europeans were playing cricket. Bankim Chandra brought a criminal case and forced Duffin, in January 1874, to appear in the Court and personally apologize to him in the presence of a large crowd of Indian and European spectators. By vindicating his honour in this way he became, virtually speaking, the symbol of national self-respect for his countrymen.

PATRIOTIC LOVE FOR THE VERNACULAR

Bankim Chandra entered the field of Bengali literature very early in life as an ardent disciple of Iswar Chandra Gupta, but he soon matured into a literary genius overshadowing all his contemporaries and influencing the younger generation by the elegance of his style, the verve of his portrayals and the profundity of his thought.

A *karmayogi* in the literary field, excelling in writing purposeful novels and history, in analysing social, scientific and political problems through essays and satires and in preparing rational religious discourses, Bankim Chandra created and enriched Bengali literature not only with a view to toning up the moral fibre of society, but also with the clear intention of cleansing the choked springs of patriotism in Bengali hearts by persuading the educated section to take up in right earnest the use of undiluted Bengali both in speech and writing.

In his paper entitled 'A Popular Literature for Bengal', read at the Bengal Social Science Association on 31 March 1870, he

pinpointed the folly of preaching, haranguing and writing in English on the part of the educated Bengalees, to whose eloquence on projects of social reform the masses remained stone-deaf. It was only through the medium of Bengali that the masses could be persuaded to lend their intelligent support to all efforts at regenerating society. He elaborated the idea further in his letter of 14 March 1872 to Dr. Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee (written after launching his famous weekly, *Bangadarsan*): "I have myself projected a Bengali Magazine with the object of making it the medium of communication and sympathy between the educated and the uneducated classes. You rightly say that the English language for good or for evil has become our vernacular; and this tends to widen the gulf between the higher and the lower ranks of Bengali society. . . . I think that we ought to disanglicize ourselves. . . . to a certain extent, and to speak to the masses in the language which they understand". That this would create an identification of interests and lead to social and national regeneration was emphasized by him in his *Bangadarsaner Pratham Suchana* (1872).

His purpose was clear and the means adopted by him to promote it were very effective. By launching *Bangadarsan* in 1872 he gave a great impetus to the development of the Bengali language and its literature. The prophet of the renaissance in Bengal, he helped the Bengali language to sprout out of its infancy to maturity by his literary works. He proved by his prose that the Bengali language could be effectively used by anyone to express his thoughts on any subject, provided there was the will to do it.

Romesh Chunder Dutt, the famous Civilian-scholar, received his inspiration to write in Bengali from Bankim Chandra. No less was the inspiration derived by Rabindranath Tagore, Srish Chandra Majumdar, Hirendranath Datta, Suresh Chandra Samajpati, Haraprasad Shastri and a host of other litterateurs from the writings of Bankim Chandra.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

There was an unmistakable ring of patriotism in all his suggestions for effecting the social regeneration of Bengal. To make it possible, he asked the educated and thinking section to seek mass support for all their efforts at social reform by communicating their thoughts and ideas to the masses in the Bengali language. This, he felt, would help the creation of a social sentiment, which in turn

would conduce to the cause of reform. None could contradict him when he condemned the tendency of the educated gentry to write and speak in English with a view to winning applause from Englishmen.

In mass education alone, not in governmental legislation, he saw the remedy of all social ills, namely, early marriage, caste system, polygamy, oppression of women and the poverty of the masses. To him, early marriage was responsible for much of the grinding poverty and the resultant miseries of the people. He argued that just as it was patently dangerous to put one in deep water before one had learnt swimming, similarly it was dangerous to tie the matrimonial millstone round the neck of a boy before he had become mature enough to understand the responsibilities of conjugal life.

Female education, he emphasized in one of his essays in *Samya*, must precede women's emancipation. In ancient India special attention was given to female education. This was all the more necessary in modern Bengal if women were to be turned into an instrument of social regeneration and national progress. Bankim Chandra believed that with proper education it would be possible for women to earn their livelihood and strive for equality with men in society.

Bankim Chandra was a staunch champion of women's rights. He held that if a widow wanted to remarry, no one should stand in her way. Then, apart from pleading for women's equal right of inheritance, he justified the wife's right to sever her connections with her husband if the latter was found to have transferred his affections to another woman. This justification, redolent of the Western conception of women's marital rights, is to be found in his portrayal of two female characters, Suryamukhi in *Bisabriksa* and Bhramar in *Krishnakanter Will*.

An advocate of a fair and square deal for the peasant masses, Bankim Chandra wanted that they should also be educated to enable them to bring their influence to bear upon the social and political problems of the country. It was also pointed out that their enlightenment would definitely lead to the mitigation of the evils of economic exploitation.

For diffusing education and enlightenment among the peasants the educated gentry were exhorted to give popular lectures and hold intimate conversations with them in every village. This purpose was also to be furthered by the revival of *Kathakatha* or popular exposi-

tion of the Epics and the Puranas as well as by the conversion of newspapers into useful organs of popular education. Lastly, Bankim Chandra's suggestion was that selfless teachers (Sannyasins) should be sent out to educate the masses as was done in ancient India.

With the spread of popular education among the masses, including women, social inequality, as he pointed out in his essays in *Samya*, would gradually disappear from society. Social equality was a necessity in the task of national regeneration, for it formed the basis of civil, political and economic equality. Social equality, by eliminating the water-tight compartments of the caste system, would conduce to national unity and solidarity. In the absence of social equality the lower classes would continue to be denied civil equality (i.e., the equal right of all to be protected in respect of person and estate and to appeal to courts of law for such protection). And to hasten the attainment of social equality the lower classes must be assured of economic equality, i.e., the right to earn a livelihood, which was the minimum requirement of moral life.

He exhorted the zamindars to treat their ryots as equals and to do all in their power to alleviate their miseries. The exploitation of the ryots, stemming from the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, must end. He urged the Government to come forward and stamp out the evils of the Permanent Settlement. He rightly pointed out that had there been no Permanent Settlement with the zamindars, the 60-million peasants would have developed themselves into such a powerful body that in any political agitation Bengal would have heard their deafening roar instead of the mild whisperings of five or six *Babus* of the British Indian Association.

Though he was patriotic enough to prefer the prefix 'Babu' to 'Mr' before his name, yet the *Babu* of his time came in for a lot of scarification at his hands. To the *Babu*, fashionably dressed but physically weak, Sanskrit seemed "most gibberish". His devotion to the English language was matched by his proportionate detestation for Bengali. To him, his New Year's Day was not the 1st of *Baisakh*, but the 1st of January. It was such a bilingual *Babu* who, constantly chewing *pan* and smoking the hubble-bubble, dreamt of recovering India from the hands of the British!

Through the character of Muchiram Gur, an honoured toady of the British, Bankim Chandra poured his scorn on the Subordinate Executive Service. To perform the duties of a Deputy Magistrate what one required was not intelligence but flattery and the ability to cheat

others. Ramchandra Datta is also a typical character, rich, dishonest and given to sycophancy. He frequently visited Government House and Belvedere, and yet was looked upon as a hero in the British Indian Association for his oratory. Between the masses and the Government stood such croaking and crooked Bengalees who, by virtue of their easy wealth and position in society, had the best of both worlds.

THE HIGH PRIEST OF NATIONALISM

Bankim Chandra was the high priest of nationalism in Bengal in the 19th century. To him, the inability of the individual to identify himself closely with the interests of the community, the total lack of any urge on the part of the community to promote its interests at the cost of foreign communities and the want of unity among Indians, even among the Hindus, had prevented the growth of a sense of nationalism in India.

The Indian masses, lying paralysed in the vice-like grip of the caste system, were too poor, too lazy and too fatalistic to exercise any salutary influence over the administrators for securing good government. In Rome and England, however, the character of the government was toned up by the opposition of the plebeians. As for independence, Indians had never much bothered about it.

Bankim Chandra tried to create a vigorous sense of nationalism by preaching to Bengalees patriotism as the highest form of religion. Every individual must be prepared to sacrifice himself in the interests of his motherland. In his immortal song, *Bande Mataram*, he offered the Bengalees a concrete image of their motherland, *Bangabhumi*. With time the Mother in *Bande Mataram* came to be identified with the whole of India. This exaltation of the song to the level of a national anthem has been made possible by its rich Sanskrit vocabulary which is understood everywhere in India.

The strength of the Mother lay in the unity of the people, and this strength was always to be used for the right cause as shown in *Ananda Math*, the Bible of modern Bengali patriots.

Bankim Chandra's novels (*Durgeshnandini*, *Ananda Math*, *Debichandhurani*, *Sitaram*) and essays (*Kamalakanta*, *Samya*, *Dharmatattva*, *Krishnacharitra*) fostered the patriotic sentiments of the people. The deification of force in the novels as a means of seeking redress for wrongs came to be liked by the younger generation in the country.

But force did not sanctify patriotism if it was whipped up and directed to the conquest of a foreign land. Bankim Chandra did not equate love for the country with European patriotism which thrived on brute force indiscriminately used by one country to grab territory from another.

Since unity was necessary for developing a sense of nationalism, Bankim Chandra suggested that English be used by Indians to make themselves understandable to one another. He thus wrote to Dr. Sambhu Chandra Mookerji on 14 March 1872: "There is no hope for India until the Bengali and the Punjabi understand each other, and can bring their joint influence to bear upon the Englishman. This can be done through the medium of English...." Inside Bengal, however, he strongly advocated the use of the vernacular to stir up the conscience of the Bengalees.

Realizing the value of history in rousing the national consciousness of the Bengalees, he wrote several articles in *Bangadarsan*. He recalled the 16th century renaissance of Bengal as well as the history of the physical prowess of the Bengalees in the past to make them realize that a nation could not achieve greatness if it remained oblivious of its past glory. His thought-provoking articles, *Banglar Kalanka* and *Bangalir Bahubal*, infused a new heart into the younger generation of Bengal.

HIS INFLUENCE

That Bankim Chandra had not written in vain on nationalism was proved by the influence he exercised over Bengali revolutionaries within a short time of his death. His ideal of nationalism transcended the boundary of Bengal to influence the minds of all patriotic Indians.

His song, *Bande Mataram*, was a source of inspiration to the anti-Partition or *Swadeshi* movement of 1905. It formed a fitting prelude to the business of all national gatherings from 1905. Agitators, with *Bande Mataram* on their lips, boldly faced police lathi charge and courted arrest. The song had thus to be banned in East Bengal. That only added to the patriotic ardour of the people to sing it openly in defiance of the Government ban as at the Barisal Conference of April 1906. This apart, the launching of the nationalists' English daily under the name of 'Bande Mataram' on 6 August 1906 was a tribute to the new spirit created in the country by Bankim Chandra's song. Aurobindo Ghosh, writing about 'Rishi Bankimchandra' in the 'Bande Mataram' of 16 April 1907, un-

reservedly acknowledged: "Of the new spirit that is leading the nation to resurgence and independence Bankim is the inspirer and political guru". The *Swaraj* of Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab, an uncompromising opponent of British culture and British rule, came out as a pictorial Bengali weekly on 10 March 1907, with a tribute to the spirit of the *Bande Mataram* song and its creator, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. *The Jugantar*, another articulate organ of the extremists (nationalists), was no less imbued with this spirit. Furthermore, it was this spirit which led Madan Lal Dhingra to murder Col. Sir William Curzon Wylie, Political A.D.C. at the India House, and face the gallows in London in 1909 with the words *Bande Mataram* on his lips.

The Rowlatt Committee Report of 1918 testified to the revolutionary influence spread in the country by Bankim Chandra's *Ananda Math*. It stated that Aurobindo Ghosh's scheme of *Bhawani Mandir* (1906), dedicated to the cause of delivering India through revolutionary activity from foreign rule, owed its origin to Bankim Chandra's *Ananda Math*. Thus, the great nationalist author gave his countrymen a sense of belonging, without which they could never have dedicated themselves to the cause of the freedom of their motherland.

HIS NON-COMMUNAL MIND

It must be clearly understood that there was no anti-Muslim bias in Bankim Chandra's apotheosis of the Mother in his *Bande Mataram* song. His conception of the motherland as the Mother awaiting deliverance from foreign bondage at the hands of her children transcended all class, caste or racial barriers. He cannot be called communal simply because the song inspired Hindu revolutionaries, and not Muslims, to resolve to sacrifice their lives for the sacred cause of their motherland's freedom. If he had nothing better to offer than the *Sakti* cult to his countrymen, it was because of his belief that this cult alone would be able to regenerate them politically. Moreover, that the purpose of political regeneration was admirably furthered by the belief of the revolutionaries in this cult was testified to by the Rowlatt Committee Report of 1918 (Chapters II and V).

In fact, the charge of communalism preferred against Bankim Chandra by some critics is not based on logical reasoning. His description of Muslim oppression and bigotry in his novels, particularly in *Sitaram*, has been misconstrued. The basic fact ignored by his critics is that Bankim Chandra was a novelist who had introduced

the superiority of Hindu characters as a dramatic element in his historical novels. Besides, while criticizing Bankim Chandra, they also overlook his effort to put in clear relief the sterling qualities of many Muslim characters in his novels: the chivalry and prowess of Osman as well as the spirit of sacrifice of Ayesha in *Durgeshnandini*, the humaneness of Mobarak and Jebunnisa in *Rajsimba* and the fidelity of Dalani Begum in *Chandrasekhar*.

All this apart, in his *Bangadesher Krishak*, particularly, no distinction was made by him between Rama Kaibarta, a Hindu peasant, and Hashim Sheikh, a Muslim peasant, both equally ground by dire poverty and rich men's oppression. That the country's welfare depended on their well-being was made abundantly clear by him in this essay of his. Lastly, Bankim Chandra's advocacy of social equality in his *Samya* and *Dharmatattva* forms an eloquent testimony to his non-communal mind which was seriously exercised by the spectacle of disunity as well as of inequality in every cell of the body politic of the country.

A CRITIC OF THE ADMINISTRATION

In his essays Bankim Chandra exposed some of the gross defects of the British Indian administration. To him the idea that the interest of India should be sacrificed to the interest of England, where the monarch lived, was repugnant. In his brilliant satire, *Bangla Sasaner Kal*, he hit out hard at the red-tape of the administration. In his biography of Muchiram Gur (*Muchiram Gurer Jiban Charit*) he poured his scorn on cheats, sycophants and pseudo-patriots who prospered under the protective wings of the British rulers in India. Merit and intelligence of the educated class did not weigh much with the rulers when filling up subordinate executive posts in the Government. Lastly, the British rulers, who had conferred on Indians many material benefits, like the railways, telegraphs, etc., and had given them ideas about individualism and nationalism, had deplorably failed to do anything for their mental strength and serenity. The Bengali *Babus*, vying with each other in offering their incense to the sahib demi-gods, never realized that all talk about local self-government would continue to be mere twaddle as long as they remained slaves of the British.

In his *Bangadesher Krishak* and *Muchiram Gurer Jiban Charit* he brought out in clear relief the flaws of the judicial system in British India. It afforded no protection to the poor against the

oppression of the rich. The prohibitive expenses of judicial trials kept away poor peasants from seeking judicial redress for their grievances. On the other hand, the rich zamindars frequently resorted to judicial processes to harass the peasants. The dilatoriness and complexity of the system came to be bedevilled further, to the great distress of the peasants, by the incompetence of the English judges and the Indian jury. In his satire *Bransonism* (named after Mr. Branson, a European advocate of the Calcutta High Court who made a savage attack on Indian character and culture at Dacca), he severely ridiculed the agitation started by the Anglo-Indian community against the Ilbert Bill of 1883. With inequality, born of racial superiority, enthroned in courts of law, Indians, naturally, could have very little faith in the system of justice maintained by the British in India. It left "a rankling sense of humiliation" in their minds and sharpened their spirit of nationalism.

Bankim Chandra did not like Britain's attempts to debar Indians on flimsy grounds from the Civil Service of India. The agitation of the Indian Association against Salisbury's attempt to shut out Indians by reducing the maximum age to nineteen was fully supported by him. He helped the collection of funds to send Lal Mohan Ghosh with a Memorial to England.

A PATRIOTIC HINDU

Bankim Chandra's spirited and patriotic reply to Mr. Hastie's theory that Kapil, the enunciator of the Sankhya system, emerged after Aristotle had supplied his philosophy to India sent a thrill round the country. Writing in the *Statesman* (18 November 1882) under the pseudonym 'Ramchandra', he pointed out that Hastie had mistaken Vedantism for Hinduism. He added: "I think the columns of the *Statesman* might have been more usefully occupied by advertisements about Doorga Puja Holiday goods than by trash which render the champion of Christianity contemptible in the eyes of idolaters. . . . Mr. Hastie's attempt to storm the 'inner citadel' of the Hindoo religion forcibly reminds us of another equally heroic achievement—that of the redoubted knight La Mancha before the windmill".

Bankim Chandra believed that the knowledge of European scholars about Hindu scriptures in Sanskrit was too meagre to warrant their indulgence in any criticism of Hinduism. Hastie had gathered his knowledge from Monier Williams. To Bankim Chandra, this was like one blind man leading another.

APOSTLE OF RATIONALISM

Bankim Chandra re-interpreted Hindu theology and ethics in such a way as to advance modern political thought in the country. Politics and ethics must be complementary to each other; so also a Hindu's spiritual and material life to enable him to be a whole being. Perhaps closely following the canons of Renan as laid down in his study of the life of Christ, Bankim Chandra reconstructed the life of Sree Krishna in such a rational manner as to make him the embodiment of the 'Ideal Man' worthy of imitation by all patriotic servants of the motherland, India.

Modern Bengal, no less than modern India, owes much to Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. He passed away on 8 April 1894, leaving behind an undying influence over the minds of his countrymen. No man has, perhaps, done more to give a better sense of direction to the nation's endeavours for attaining self-rule.

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NABAKRISHNA GHOSH

Nabakrishna Ghosh, son of Kailash Chandra Ghosh, was born on 29 August 1837 at Pathuriaghata in Calcutta. Educated at the Oriental Seminary and privately coached for some time by Capt. Palmer, Nabakrishna excelled in composing English poems. Palmer endearingly called him "the young Pope" of Bengal. His 'Willow-Drops', 'Hymn to Durga' and 'The Ode in Welcome to Prince Albert' marked him out as a poet of great promise. Known by his pen-name 'Ram Sharma' to the reading public, he was, as stated by one of his

admirers, "No University flower, having developed into one before the University was established." He worked in many Government offices before retiring.

A PATRIOTIC WRITER

Many of his writings, published in *The Englishman*, *Reis* and *Rayyet*, *Mookerjee's Magazine*, and the *Indian Mirror*, were very critical of the British administration in India. His revealing essays on the Orissa famine of 1866 stung the conscience of the Government and forced it to adopt relief measures.

An advocate of the rights of his countrymen, he opposed the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the Municipal Bill of 1899. His progressive views led him to take up the cudgels in favour of the Ilbert Bill in 1883.

He turned out to be thoroughly anti-British in his opposition to the Age of Consent Bill of 1891. Writing in the *Bāṅgavasi* of 21 March 1891 under the pen-name of 'Ram Sharma', he pointed out, in an imaginary dialogue, that the Hindus would be protected by their Goddess against all foreign onslaughts on their religion, if they forswore the use of British goods. To him, the Age of Consent Bill was only a device of the Goddess to bring the Hindus to their senses.

Long-lived, he spent the last days of his life in obscurity.

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GIRISH CHANDRA MAJUMDAR

A selfless social worker, Girish Chandra Majumdar, Son of Hriday Krishna Majumdar, was born in September 1837 at Birtara in Bikrampur (Dacca).

After passing the Entrance Examination from the Pogose School in Dacca in 1860, he leaned towards Brahmoism together with his brother, Harish Chandra, and soon gave up his college studies because of his overriding passion for social regeneration work.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

The *Bidyotsabinee Sabha* in Bikrampur, devoted to the task of disseminating knowledge with a view to advancing the cause of social progress, was essentially the handiwork of Girish Chandra and his brother, Harish Chandra. Girish Chandra's essays condemning social customs were read at this *Sabha*. Their subsequent publication in the form of a book entitled *Swabhab Darsan* exercised a salutary influence over the intelligentsia of Dacca.

ADVOCATE OF FEMALE EDUCATION

The main centre of his untiring labour in behalf of female education was Barisal. In 1867, he established a school there for married women. Imbued with a lofty sense of service, he personally visited the houses of his students and instructed them in many useful occupations, including sewing, which tended to make them self-reliant and conscious of the new needs of society. For this noble patriotic endeavour, the aim of which was to regenerate society, he sought no remuneration.

An exemplary character, Girish Chandra Majumdar passed away in 1913.

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HEMCHANDRA BANDYOPADHYAYA

Son of Kailash Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya was born on 17 April 1838 at Gulita in the district of Hooghly. He was brought up in his maternal grandfather's house at Kidderpore. His academic career at the Hindu College, called Presidency College from 1855, was brilliant. He worked his way up with scholarships, and creditably passed the B.A. Examination of the Calcutta University in 1859.

After working in the Military Auditor-General's Office as a clerk and subsequently in the Calcutta Training Academy as Headmaster, he became a pleader in the Calcutta High Court (the former Sadar Diwani Adalat) on the strength of his L.L. Degree obtained in 1861. In 1862 he was appointed a Munsiff, which post he resigned

within a few months because of his reluctance to go to a distant station. He returned to the Calcutta High Court as a pleader and took the B.L. degree in 1866. It took him a long time to build up lucrative practice. In April 1890, he was appointed the Senior Government Pleader in the High Court.

A. PATRIOTIC POET

Hemchandra lives in the history of renascent Bengal as a luminous embodiment of nationalism. He was a poet with a purpose, lofty and inspiring to his countrymen. The distinguishing merit of his poems lay not so much in their aesthetic appeal as in the way they stirred the patriotic sentiments of their readers. An inspiring sense of nationalism underlay many of his notable poems, which might have been composed from a feeling of hostility towards the flaunted racial superiority of the British rulers in India. The inevitable struggle between the races in India, Indians and Britishers, with the wronged ultimately prevailing over the wrong-doer, was figuratively envisaged by him in his description of the struggle between the gods and the demons in Heaven in his classic epic, *Britrasamhar*.

However, it is not Hemchandra's *Britrasamhar* but *Bharat Sangeet*, with its distinct emphasis on nationalism, that has found an echo in the heart of the ordinary reader since the day of its publication in the 'Education Gazette' in July 1872. A soul-stirring poem on the lost freedom of India, it appealed to Indians to wake up from their slumber, become conscious of their self-respect, slough off their servitude and march ahead, as all other self-respecting nations in the world were doing.

"Sing, O my clarionet! Sing to these words:

Everyone is free in this wide world,

Everyone is awake in the glory of science,

India alone lieth asleep!"

(translated by B. C. Pal)

This poem, which supplied inspiration to those working for national awakening, made Hemchandra incur the displeasure of the Government. Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, editor of the 'Education Gazette', had to submit an explanation for permitting the publication of the poem.

But the patriot in Hemchandra was irrepressible. In his *Bharat*

Bilap he lamented the degradation of India and the manner in which Indians, oblivious of their past glory, grovelled before the white-skinned and lived in awe, unable to muster enough courage to give vent to their feelings. It was a pity, as he expressed in his *Kalachakra*, that none in India shed tears over the memories of her past glory. The whole of India was silent. Thus, in his *Birbahu Kabya* he reminded his countrymen of the determination with which their forbears defended their freedom. His heart overflowed with burning patriotism when he stirringly appealed to his Mother—his Motherland—to rise up and liberate herself from the state of subjection and exploitation to which she had been long held down by ruthless foreigners. And he was sure, as he optimistically expressed in his *Ripon Utsab—Bharater Nidrabhanga*, that the great Mother of India would wake up sooner or later on hearing the cry not merely of Bengal but of the whole nation comprising Hindus and Muslims. Both Hindus and Muslims were *Bharatmata's* children, and they were working in unison to awaken her. A mind free from all prejudices and rising above all barriers of sectarianism and communalism was what distinguished Hemchandra as a national poet.

But to Bengalees also he made a special appeal, in his *Ganga*, for developing the spirit of self-sacrifice as well as the spirit of self-dedication to the cause of regeneration. Wherever they might happen to be, as he feelingly expressed in his *Janmabhumi*, they must never forget Bengal.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

To Hemchandra, the pre-requisite of social regeneration was women's emancipation. In his *Bharat Bilap*, he chided the Hindus for keeping women in servitude. He, however, felt that they would cease to do so if they cared to see for themselves the progress made by women in other countries. On the other hand, women also, who had a great role to play in society, were exhorted to recollect the glorious achievements of Aitreya, Janaki, Khana and Lilavati, all great women of the past, and make conscious efforts to awaken themselves out of their age-old torpor. They were asked to be as brave as the Rajput and Mahratta women of the past. And, lastly, the poet rightly felt that with the proper cultivation of science and arts on their part, women in the country could become worthy mothers of heroes.

Hemchandra denounced cruel customs which oppressed women, particularly widows. Describing the sufferings of widows in his

Bidhaba Ramani, he condemned the irrational attitude of the Hindus who were never hesitant to sacrifice their womenfolk in deference to meaningless customs. It was quite in keeping with his liberal and progressive attitude when he published his *Kulin Mahila Bilap*, which lent strength to the anti-polygamy movement initiated earlier by Vidyasagar.

Hemchandra's breadth of vision, which encompassed the whole of India peopled mainly by Hindus and Muslims, gave a new dimension to the poetry of renaissance Bengal. This great bard of freedom was unfortunately a spendthrift, never caring to lay aside anything for the future. Stricken with poverty and blindness, he spent the last days of his life in unrelieved misery until his death on 24 May 1903.

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KRISTO DAS PAL

One of the most brilliant men of his time, Kristo Das Pal was born in April 1838. His father, Iswar Chandra Pal, was a man of small means.

Kristo Das was a meritorious student of the Oriental Seminary. For a brief period in 1853 he received a liberal education from the Christian missionaries, Messrs. Milne and Morgan (the latter, called 'the Indian Arnold', was the Principal of the Parental Academy, subsequently renamed the Doveton College). In 1854, he entered the Hindu Metropolitan College and read there till 1857 with such dedicated educationists as Capt. D. L. Richardson, Capt. F. Palmer, Capt. Harris, William Kirkpatrick and William Masters.

While in college, he became a member of the 'Calcutta Literary Free Debating Club', which was patronized by men like E. B. Cowell, W. Kirkpatrick and Alexander Duff. Not merely the political

problems of the day, but social, economic and educational matters as well were discussed here. It is said that even George Thompson, M.P., took some interest in the club, though he could not be persuaded by Kristo Das to address its member, while in Calcutta on his second visit.

Ambitious and politically-conscious, Kristo Das was attracted towards journalism by the achievements of Harish Chandra Mukherjee, Editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot', who was looked upon by George Thompson as the only Indian to understand politics in the country. Together with Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee, Kristo Das, brought out 'The Calcutta Monthly Magazine', but its publication had to be stopped within six months because of their inexperience.

After leaving College, Kristo Das worked for a short period as Translator in the Court of the District Judge of 24-Parganas. Dismissed from there for his alleged incompetence, he cast his moorings permanently in journalism. He became the editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot' towards the close of 1861, and by the versatility of his pen he "raised the Patriot, during his 23 years of editorship, from a nearly moribund condition to the first place among the native Indian journals." His association with the British Indian Association was also intimate. Starting as Assistant Secretary, he became the Association's Secretary in 1879. But before that his competent management of the 'Hindoo Patriot', combined with his growing influence in society, earned him important positions and Government honours: Municipal Commissioner and Justice of the Peace in 1863, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1872, a Fellow of the Calcutta University and such honours as Rai Bahadur and the C.I.E. in 1877 and 1878 respectively. In 1883, he represented the British Indian Association on the Viceroy's Executive Council. His importance can be gauged from the fact, as stated by 'The Englishman' in its issue of 25 January 1884, that a record of his life was, virtually speaking, "the record of the political history of Bengal during the past twenty years".

A VOTARY OF PROGRESS

It was as early as 1856 that Kristo Das gave clear indications of his social and political consciousness in his paper, entitled 'Young Bengal Vindicated', read on June 1 at the anniversary meeting of David Hare. He described Young Bengal as a new race of worthies bringing glory to the nation. Their emergence, breaking the bonds of

ignorance and gross superstition and overthrowing the prescriptive despotism of the clergy, marked a proud era in the history of Bengal. To him, Young Bengal stood for intellectual freedom and social progress as evidenced in their concerted move for the introduction of widow remarriage. Boldly wearing the reformer's mantle, this group was never tired of prodding the Legislative Council for the promotion of causes beneficial to the country. He, thus, maintained that it was a sheer travesty of truth to hold that English education had denationalized Young Bengal.

He valued English education, because it helped his countrymen to understand better the social evils which stood in the way of their progress. "A Hindu of Hindus", he was opposed, not to the missionaries' efforts to spread English education, but to their policy of proselytization. He always felt that in order to break the trammels of the past his countrymen needed the aid of "the armoury of Western learning".

That such a votary of progress would advocate the cause of higher education was natural. Over this question he fell out with Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who not only wanted to lower the status of the Sanskrit College, but also to prohibit the study of poetry in schools. Secretly encouraged by Mr. Aitkinson, the Director of Public Instruction, Kristo Das wrote in the 'Hindoo Patriot', challenging the right of a "profane ruler", who domineered "over the official foolscap and dull prose, to interdict the worship of the heavenly Muses" by banishing poetry from schools.

He also attacked Campbell's policy to encourage primary education at the cost of higher education. It was on his initiative that a Memorial was submitted by the British Indian Association, asking Sir George Campbell not to reduce Government expenditure on collegiate education in the mofussil. Campbell, who had abolished Krishnagar College, typified the hostility of the British bureaucracy towards the English-educated Bengalees. These young men, as pointed out by Bipin Chandra Pal, were the pioneers of the great freedom movement in the country.

As a member of the Committee appointed, in April 1877, by the Government under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble E. C. Bayley to decide upon the nature of text-books for Indian schools, Kristo Das pointed out, in his separate and exhaustive note, the need to promote the Anglo-Vernacular system of education all over India.

This system had proved highly successful in Bengal. But in the provinces where English education was relegated to a position of secondary importance, "not even one-twentieth of the bulk and variety of Bengali literature" was achieved there.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Kristo Das believed in the educative power of agitations for political reform. These not merely tended to foster the spirit of sacrifice, but also to exalt the character and the condition of the people. He educated the people by his persistent and penetrating criticism of Government's political measures. Though moderate in his views, he was the leader of public opinion in Bengal for not less than twenty years. It was through the 'Hindoo Patriot', of which he was the editor for twenty three years, that he influenced the educated public mind.

The way he attacked almost every measure of Sir George Campbell in the 'Hindoo Patriot' proved to be a source of delight and inspiration to his countrymen. He combined boldness with logical reasoning and excellent marshalling of facts to expose the hollowness of Campbell's plans about mass education, parallel line of promotion and the Subordinate Executive Service. When provoked further by Campbell's comment that the 'Hindoo Patriot' bore ill-will towards the Government, Kristo Das wrote a series of articles in his paper in 1874 against the administration, the land policy, the system of criminal justice, etc. The most vitriolic sarcasm was poured upon Campbell in the article, 'Adieu to George'. In this Campbell was described as a Governor who attempted to execute his unpopular policies "out of sympathy for the people!" He tried to humiliate the people out of sympathy for them. For his unreasonable measures he ended up as the most unpopular Governor—unpopular with every service and class of people, the Judicial Service, the uncovenanted Service, the departmental heads, non-official Europeans, members of the bar, educated Indians, zamindars and ryots.

Excessive official interference in or control over anything was repugnant to him. When in 1874 Campbell banned the *Mahesh Rath* festival by an order, Kristo Das personally intervened and prevailed upon Lord Northbrook to rescind it.

Whenever any mofussil Civilian abused his power, Kristo Das effectively employed his pen to right the wrong. Many members of the uncovenanted Service, including Nabin Chandra Sen, were

grateful to him for the way he helped them against oppressive, vindictive and unthinking Civilians in the districts. By publishing in the 'Hindoo Patriot' of 28 August 1876 the secret resolution of Sir Richard Temple, censuring and removing Mr. Kirkwood from Chittagong for grave dereliction of duty, Kristo Das assuaged Nabin Chandra Sen's feeling of injury.

Time and again Kristo Das appeared as the champion of the underdog, be they Indian Deputy Magistrates or Indian labourers. In December 1881, he vehemently opposed the Immigration Bill, because it was conceived in the interests of the European tea planters and contained provisions patently prejudicial to those of Indian labour. He characterized this enactment as "the slave law of India" and took the initiative, as Secretary to the British Indian Association, in drawing up and submitting a Memorial to the Viceroy.

However moderate his views might be, he did not spare the British Government for adding to the poverty of the Indian people by incurring an extravagant expenditure on the army, the numerical strength of which was steadily increased since the Mutiny of 1857. Payments to the War Office for ill-defined Home Charges threw a great burden on India. All this apart, the imposition of heavy taxes and rents, the reckless export of grain, the repeal of import duties on fine cotton goods by Lord Lytton under the pressure of the cotton magnates of Manchester and the attempt to make good the loss in revenue by some other levy were condemned by Kristo Das and his colleagues in the British Indian Association.

As an advocate of the policy of "progressive realization of self-government", Kristo Das wanted not merely the increasing association of Indians with the administration but also the larger admission of Indians to higher posts of trust and responsibility in keeping with the assurances held out by the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. It was thus natural for him to become agitated over the refusal of the Civil Service Commissioners to admit Surendranath Banerjea into the Covenanted Civil Service on the untenable ground of the latter's age in 1869.

He hated rigid official control over the Calcutta Municipality, which on paper was tried to be developed as an institution of self-government. He could not thus pull on well with Lord Ulick Browne, the domineering Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality, for ten months from March 1872. The attempt to tighten official control over this institution through the Calcutta Municipal Bill of 1876

made him oppose it vehemently, despite its provision for the election of representatives by the people to the Municipal Committee. Kristo Das opposed the Bill on the grounds that it nullified the principle of self-government by leaving the rights of appointment and dismissal of the Chief Executive Officer in the hands of the Government, that it opened the door to abuse of power by sanctioning the union of the functions of the Chairman of Commissioners and the Commissioner of Police in the hands of one person, and that it left enough scope for official pressure to overwhelm the independent Justices. He thus advocated not merely the separation of the two offices as had been done in Madras and Bombay, but also the election of the Chairman by the Town Council. Notwithstanding his opposition, the Bill was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council in 1876. This opposition of his is often misunderstood as his opposition to the principle of election. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is true that he did not favour much the principle of election in view of the general backwardness of his countrymen, but there is hardly any ground for stretching this point to explain his opposition to the Bill.

OPPONENT OF LEGAL INEQUALITY

European opposition to the Ilbert Bill of 1883 was a shock to Kristo Das, who, in his speech of 9 March the same year in the Legislative Council, expressed the hope that Englishmen would not oppose the noble attempt to establish equality in the eye of law, "which the history of their own country and the teachers of their own political system" loudly proclaimed. Marked by sobriety, his well-informed criticism did not fail to sting the conscience of many Europeans, though in the end it proved unavailing. When the Bill was withdrawn, he declared on 4 January 1884: "I love peace, but honour more and justice above all". Needless to say, the denial of honour and justice to Indian Magistrates hurt him very much, but he was too practical and sober a politician to behave either impulsively like his agitated Indian compatriots or indecently like Branson.

In his speech of 25 January 1884, Kristo Das also stressed the desirability of extending the system of jury trial to Indians. He looked upon the jury system as the "most useful instrument of self-culture and self-discipline in the administration of the affairs of a nation". Indians should have the right to jury trial as Europeans had. In this speech he pointed an accusing finger at the British system of justice which helped the perpetuation of the grossest form of

inequality between Indians and Europeans in the eye of the law of the country.

CHAMPION OF THE FREE PRESS

That Kristo Das, who had dedicated himself to journalism, would wax eloquent over the necessity of having a free Press in the country was natural. To him, the primary function of the Press was to interpret "the wants, wishes, sentiments of the people of India", who had no other means of making their voices heard. He also looked upon the free Press, conducted by Indians, as "a vehicle of their national thoughts and aspirations". Such a Press was the best strength of the Government. On 30 January 1873, he paid a great tribute to Indian journalists by describing them as "thinking battalions, waging a bloodless warfare in extending the empire of reason and knowledge" in the country.

A votary of the Free Press, he was shocked beyond measure when Lord Lytton promulgated the Vernacular Press Act on 14 March 1878. While praising the benefits conferred by the British Government, he asked whether the safety of the empire required this odious law and also whether the worst of vernacular papers were more violent than the Irish papers, which the Government in Britain did not see any reason to suppress. He was convinced that the Government in India was ill-advised to push the Bill through with unseemly haste. He thus fully supported the public meeting that was held in April 1878 to protest against the Act. And he felt jubilant when this monstrous Act was rescinded by Lord Ripon in 1881. He was right in saying that the Act died of inanition.

SUPPORT FOR THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION

Kristo Das, though Secretary of the British Indian Association, was liberal and patriotic enough to attend, together with Maharaja Narendra Krishna, the inaugural meeting of the Indian Association, a middle-class organization, on 26 July 1876. This seasoned and sober politician, who had valiantly upheld popular interests whenever necessary, was largely instrumental in the maintenance of cordial relations between the British Indian Association and the Indian Association. It was because of his breadth of vision that Surendranath Banerjea described him as "one of the greatest political leaders that Bengal, or India, has ever produced".

Kristo Das never attempted to persuade the zamindars to do

their duty by the ryots. He was handicapped by the limitations of his position as a salaried official of the British Indian Association. Nevertheless, what he did for his countrymen cannot be ignored by any impartial student of history. A self-made man, the prince of Indian journalists, a debater of great skill and a very practical-minded politician, Kristo Das Pal died on 24 July 1884.

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KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

Keshab Chandra Sen was a remarkable figure in the history of renascent Bengal. A social and religious reformer, gifted with a magnetic personality made irresistible by his sharp intellect, breadth of vision and oratorical powers, he was probably the most widely known man of his time in India.

Born in Calcutta on 19 November 1838, Keshab Chandra, the grandson of the famed Ram Kamal Sen and the son of Peary Mohan Sen, was brought up in opulence and luxury. But in keeping with the tradition of learning in the family, he was given the best of education in the Junior and Senior Departments of the Hindu College (called Presidency College from 15 June 1855) from 1848 to 1858. Only for a brief period in 1853 he studied in the Hindu Metropolitan College.

A voracious reader devoting most of his time to the study of mental and moral philosophy, he soon developed a religious turn of mind with a strong belief in the efficacy of prayer and meditation for chastening and exalting the spirit. Attracted and influenced by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, he joined the *Brahmo Samaj* in 1857 and soon became one of its stalwarts, distinguished from others by his missionary zeal for its cause. His disdain for worldly prospects

led him to resign his post as clerk in the Bank of Bengal and dedicate himself wholly to the promotion of social and religious reform in the country.

On 13 April 1862 he was formally appointed *Acharya* (Minister) of the *Brahmo Samaj*, and on 23 January the following year the title of *Brahmananda* was conferred upon him by Debendranath Tagore. But the understanding between them did not last long. Keshab Chandra's radical views on intermarriage, remarriage of widows and abolition of caste distinctions did not find favour with Debendranath. The first schism in the *Samaj* was ultimately precipitated by Keshab Chandra's objection to the wearing of the sacred thread by the Ministers. In February 1865 he seceded from the *Adi Brahmo Samaj* and established the *Brahmo Samaj of India*, which was formally opened in a new building in 1869.

He delivered lectures on Brahmoism and social reform in different parts of India. His reputation as a social reformer and religious preacher spread far and wide as a result of his brief visit to England in 1870. His successful propaganda in England, as Bipin Chandra Pal points out, strengthened the confidence of the Bengalees in their educated countrymen.

After his return to India he again plunged into activities calculated to effect the social and moral regeneration of his countrymen. But despite his sway over the *Brahmo Samaj of India*, he had to face rebels among his own followers like Sivanath Sastri, Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, Bijoy Krishna Goswami, Durga Mohan Das and others, who, in 1878, saw in the marriage of his minor daughter, Sunitidevi, to the minor Maharaja of Cooch Behar, Nripendra Narayan, a flagrant violation of the Marriage Act of 1872, which he had himself sponsored with religious zeal. They thus disowned his leadership and seceded to form in 1878 what came to be called the *Sadbaran Brahmo Samaj*.

WORK OF REGENERATION

He deemed education to be the primary need of his countrymen. The wider diffusion of knowledge among them by the British Government could alone clean all the springs of national energy necessary for their intellectual, moral and social advancement. He made this need clear in his speech, entitled 'England's Duties to India', delivered at Mr. Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle in London on 24 May 1870. Education, he pointed out, must be given

the position of Indian women. Under its auspices the Normal School for Indian ladies was opened. Sivanath Sastri, Bijoy Krishna Goswami, Umesh Chandra Datta and many others helped the institution. About fifty ladies regularly attended the School and received instruction on modern lines. The Government offered a grant of Rs. 2,000|- annually towards its maintenance.

ADVOCATE OF SOCIAL COHESION

Keshab Chandra knew that intermarriage, which had become inevitable among Brahmos as a result of their abandonment of caste restrictions, would conduce to social cohesion, a great need of the time. He thus encouraged intermarriage, the first being celebrated according to the Brahmo ritual in August 1862. Since the legality of such marriages came to be challenged, he had the Legislature pass the Civil Marriage Act III in 1872. This Act, though applicable to Brahmos only, was practically the first attempt to prise open the hold of the caste system on marriages in society.

To promote social cohesion, he asked, in his article entitled 'Social Reformation of India' (21 February 1863), members of different castes to dine promiscuously in public and to take the pledge that they would ignore all caste distinctions in everything. "Caste will naturally perish in the uncongenial atmosphere of religious brotherhood—destroy caste but construct brotherhood", he exhorted the reformers. These reformers were asked to be constructive, courageous and thoughtful, and to refrain from treading on the corns of others in matters of taste and judgment.

To promote social cohesion on a larger scale he threw open the membership of his new *Brahmo Samaj of India* to men of all races and nationalities. His *Bharat Asrama* tended to promote the same purpose. His *Nababidhan* (New Dispensation) of 1878 blended harmoniously all that was best in Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. The unity and brotherhood of man came to be proclaimed through it. Equally unsectarian and universal in nature was his *Nava Sambhita* (New Way of Life), which contained the essence of moral law and tried to find a common meeting-ground for members of all sects in India. In his scheme of social cohesion the idea of the unity of India was innate. This was made clear in his speech, 'Religion of Love' (August 1860), wherein he asked every Brahmo to be above petty sectarianism and blind fanaticism, as well as to treat a Hindu, a Christian, a Mahommedan as his own brother.

A PATRIOT

A patriot, eager to promote the welfare and unity of the whole country, and not merely of Bengal, Keshab Chandra was very optimistic of India occupying a high place in the scale of nations one day. To hasten the attainment of this end he wanted his countrymen to be patriotic and dutiful. In his exhortation, 'An Appeal to India' (July 1865), he told his countrymen: "Let patriotism warm your hearts and quicken your energies, as education has spread your understanding and enlarged your views". He continued: "If you understand the duties you owe to your mother country, then fling away your selfish apathy and indifference and address yourselves with vigour to her amelioration". Reformers, he emphasized, must reform themselves first and have a firm and abiding sense of duty when participating in any reform movement. Besides, while engaged in the work of reform, they must not imitate foreign nations, nor introduce the fashionable luxuries of the West.

The patriot in him was stung to the quick when Mr. R. Scott Moncrief, a Scottish merchant in Calcutta, publicly vilified Indians and their womenfolk. The Indian public was greatly excited, and to allay their excitement Keshab Chandra delivered an address entitled 'Jesus Christ—Europe and Asia' on 5 May 1866. He regretted how Christ had been crucified in the life of European settlers in India. If there were foxes among the Indians, he claimed that there were wolves among the Europeans; and if the former were led by selfishness to commit forgery, the latter were driven by anger to commit murder. Then, after expressing his high regard for Christ, who was an Asian like him, he regretted the denationalization of Indian converts to Christianity. They abandoned the manners and customs of their country, and in dress and diet they assumed "an affected air of outlandishness", which separated them from their own countrymen. He asked them not to confound the spirit of Christianity with the fashions of western civilization.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

He desired, in his speech entitled 'England's Duties to India', that the Government should throw open to educated Indians posts which were reserved exclusively for Europeans. He argued that the employment of the Indian agency would enable the British to have a cheaper machinery of administration. This would also encourage Indians to take an abiding interest in their own education as well as

in the task of reforming society. Besides, higher posts for Indians would mean better practical training and discipline for them. He never doubted their fitness for such posts.

Keshab Chandra could not tolerate the ill-treatment of his countrymen by Europeans. In his speech, 'British Cooperation in the National Regeneration of India' (28 June 1870), he warned the British Government that unless they ruled properly, they would be forced to leave India to herself. Indians would then do their business in the best way they could. Haughty Anglo-Indians, he pointed out, must cease treating Indians as if they were nothing more than cattle.

On 24 March 1876, he took part in the public meeting held under the presidency of Maharaja Narendra Krishna to protest against the new Civil Service rules designed to prevent the entry of Indians to the Service through a reduction of the age-limits. Surendranath Banerjea was the livewire of the whole movement. A Civil Service Memorial was drawn up for submission to Parliament through Lal Mohan Ghosh, a barrister.

As a missionary, preaching the cause of social reform and national regeneration, Keshab Chandra, 'the Thunderbolt of Bengal', blazed a trail which seemed to have been followed later by Vivekananda. They worked not merely for Bengal but for the whole of India. Keshab Chandra's *Bharat Asram* also might have served as a model for the *Asrams* of the Ramakrishna Mission.

A remarkable man, he was as much respected by the Viceroys of India, like Lord Lawrence and Lord Northbrook, as by the Hindu saint, Sri Ramakrishna. All communities in India, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, held him in high esteem for his unsectarian ideas. The best evidence of this could be found in the mammoth funeral procession that followed his bier after his death in Calcutta on 8 February 1884.

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GOVINDA CHANDRA ROY

Govinda Chandra Roy has left his mark on the history of renaissance Bengal as a nationalist poet. Son of Gour Sundar Roy, Dewan of J. P. Wise, a European indigo planter in Dacca, Govinda was born in 1838. Though his schooling was brief, he took pains to learn Sanskrit and Persian while at Dacca. His leanings towards Brahmoism, to which he was drawn by Bijoy Krishna Goswami, and his subsequent relinquishment of the Brahminical thread incensed his father into expelling him from home.

He worked as a school teacher for a few years and then joined the Settlement office in Barisal as a clerk. But from this temporary post he had to run away to Benares in 1868 as a result of his incurring the displeasure of some officials, whose bad character was exposed by him in the *Dacca Prakash*. His peripatetic life came to a close when he finally settled down at Agra as a homoeopathic practitioner.

A NATIONALIST POET

His poems—*Bharat-Bilap*, *Yamunalahari* and *Din ki emon habe*—raised him to eminence as the composer of poems saturated with lofty feelings of patriotism and nationalism. There was a time when the opening lines of *Bharat-Bilap*—*Kata kal pare, bala Bharat re, dukkha-sagar satari par habe* (Announce, O Bharat, when shall thou swim across the ocean of misery)—were on the lips of every patriot devoted to the task of promoting the welfare of his country. In this poem he stung the conscience of his countrymen by pointing out that they had become aliens in their own land by selling away their birthright to freedom. They had adopted a foreign language and foreign dress and had bartered away their gold for mere foreign glass, blissfully oblivious of the glorious past of their motherland. They went about in borrowed plumes, though they were insulted everywhere. Unless they bowed their heads to foreigners, there was no food for them. Service was the only means of livelihood open to them. True enough, there were traders among them, but their trade was not worth the name. Indifferent to any sense of unity or of freedom, they continued to be dependent for the basic necessities of life on foreigners. Enslaved as they were, none of their pleadings was given any hearing in foreign quarters. Lastly, it was a shame to see them reduce their religion to caste system and a number of insensate taboos regarding food. The poet asked how the maintenance of the caste

system would benefit them when, with iron chains round their legs, they licked the feet of the foreigners. He, thus, exhorted them to relinquish all objects of personal pleasure and to develop their minds and bodies so as to make them conducive to the interests of the country. *Bharat*, he said, needed their blood and tears for national purification and regeneration—for redeeming herself from slavery.

In his *Yamunalahari*, Govinda Chandra recalled the glorious past of free India before she came to be conquered and dominated by foreigners. One of the evil results of this foreign domination was the growth of the practice of keeping women in seclusion and ignorance.

In his *Din ki emon habe* (will the day be ever like this?), he urged his countrymen to abandon self-centredness and work unitedly for the welfare of India. Their cooperative endeavour, spreading from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, must cover both the fields of agriculture and industry. And their spirit of unity must be such as to inspire them all to rise up like one man in protest against any affront to which their motherland might be subjected by the foreigners.

To patriotic nationalists, these poems of Govinda Chandra opened up new vistas of thought and action. With the progress of the national movement in the country, these poems became increasingly popular. Their appeal showed no sign of wearing off even with time. Govinda Chandra Roy, whose great spirit lived in them, died at Agra in 1917.

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SAMBHU CHANDRA MOOKERJEE

An eminent journalist and scholar, whose views on national problems commanded respect and attention in every section of the governmental hierarchy and society, Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee occupies a fairly important place in the history of the awakening of Bengal in the nineteenth century.

Son of Mathur Mohan Mookerjee, a prosperous trader, Sambhu Chandra was born in May 1839 at Baranagore. Educated at the Oriental Seminary and the Hindu Metropolitan College, he soon made his mark by his proficiency in the English language. While in College, he was encouraged and helped by its Principal, Capt. D. L.

Richardson, to develop a deep and abiding love for the English language and its literature.

Sambhu Chandra took to journalism very early in life. While in College, he and Kristo Das Pal, both great friends like 'Beaumont and Fletcher', brought out a periodical called the 'Calcutta Monthly Magazine', which had, however, to be wound up shortly because of mismanagement by its inexperienced editors. With time and experience, he became a seasoned and reputed journalist like Kristo Das Pal. 'The Morning Chronicle' and 'The Hindu Intelligencer' helped him to sharpen his quill before he began to use it effectively for the 'Hindoo Patriot', of which he was virtually the editor during Harish Chandra Mukherjee's illness and to which he frequently contributed while his bosom friend, Kristo Das Pal, was the editor. He continued to write for the 'Hindoo Patriot' even during his brief stay at Lucknow as Secretary of the Oudh Taluqdars' Association (its moving spirit was Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee) and also as editor of its weekly organ, the 'Samachar Hindustani'.

His first notable journalistic venture was 'Mookerjee's Magazine', a monthly launched in February 1861. Though very popular with both Indians and Europeans, the Magazine, brought out by fits and starts, was ultimately merged, in 1882, in his weekly, 'Reis and Rayet', which soon became conspicuous for its literary finish and breadth of view. It was so brilliant that Robert Knight, editor of 'The Statesman', used to look out impatiently for it every Sunday.

It was not until 1882 that Sambhu Chandra could settle down permanently to journalism by curbing his restless spirit, which often made him undertake excursions into diverse fields of activities in different parts of the country. He was for some time the headmaster of the Calcutta Training Academy. But because of his knowledge of law, his services were eagerly sought by Indian princes. Thus, he worked as Dewan of the Nawab Nazim of Bengal at Murshidabad, as Secretary of the Raja of Kashipur, as Personal Assistant of the Nawab of Rampur and, lastly, as a Minister in the court of the Maharaja of Tippera. He was also a Fellow of the University of Calcutta.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Harish Chandra Mukherjee's influence is said to have led Sambhu Chandra, then a mere college student, to write a pamphlet on the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Because of Canning's 'Control of the

Press Act', which forbade the publication of political topics in the Indian Press, the pamphlet was published in London in 1857 through the agency of Malcolm Lewin, a former Judge of the Madras Sudder Court, who had lost his appointment for having protested against an alleged injustice done to Hindus in cases involving Christians. The same pamphlet, entitled 'The Mutinies and the People', was published in Calcutta in 1859. Though it stressed the fact that the Mutiny was not the people's movement to drive out the British, as held by Kaye, Ball and a few others, it showed how politically conscious 18-year-old Sambhu Chandra had become.

In 1860, he wrote another pamphlet containing a powerful indictment of Mr. James Wilson who tried to restore equilibrium in the finances of the Government affected by the Mutiny by imposing the income-tax. Sambhu Chandra argued that this obnoxious impost was opposed to the spirit of the Queen's Proclamation. In the absence of arrangements for popular representation it was most improper to levy this tax. He was so worked up over what he believed to be an unwarrantable tax that he did not even spare Lord Canning for having assented to its levy. It was India's misfortune, wrote he, that such an unthinking Viceroy was appointed by Lord Palmerston out of personal considerations, which showed how poor was his sense of ministerial responsibility. He had no liking for Lord Lawrence as Viceroy. Lawrence's repressive and retrograde policy, openly and insultingly followed, was repugnant to him.

The arrest and the subsequent deposition of Malhar Rao Gaikwar of Baroda in 1875 on the charge of gross misgovernment sparked off an agitation in Calcutta led by Sambhu Chandra. His article entitled "The Baroda Coup d'etat: The Empire is Peace", published in 'Mookerjee's Magazine' (Baroda No. XXVII, March 1875), created a great stir in educated and politically-conscious quarters. This article, which showed Sambhu Chandra's mastery of the details of criminal law, of Indian politics and of the ante-chamber intrigues in Indian courts, was actually an impeachment of Lord Northbrook's Baroda policy. The climax of the agitation was reached when on 8 April 1876 a public meeting was held in the Town Hall under the presidency of Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to vote an address to Lord Northbrook. But Sambhu Chandra, Jadunath Ghose, Headmaster of Seal's Free College, Manmathanath Mallick, Barrister-at-Law, Jogesh Chandra Datta, Debendranath Datta, Probodh Chandra Mallick, Hemchandra Mallick, Upendra

Chandra Datta, Naresh Chandra Datta and Bhanu Chandra Datta "set a noble example of fearless and unselfish patriotism" by actively opposing the attempt to vote an address to the deposer of Malhar Rao Gaikwar. Sambhu Chandra was the guiding spirit of this bold opposition, and Manmathanath Mallick was the spokesman of "the immortal ten" on the platform. Though they sustained a defeat at the meeting, they set a stirring example of moral courage before their countrymen.

To Sambhu Chandra, unemployment made educated Bengalee youths discontented and hostile to the British government. It made them politically conscious and disaffected. In his article entitled "Where shall the Baboo go?" he made a pointed reference to the disinclination of British officers in northern and central India to accept a Bengalee's application for any situation, no matter how humble it might be. In August 1869 an advertisement appeared in the 'Moniteur', the official publication of the North Western Provinces, inviting applications for the post of Translator and Head Clerk in a District Judge's Court on a pay of Rs. 120/- per month. The advertisement ended thus: "Bengali Baboos and youths fresh from college need not apply". Sambhu Chandra could not but condemn this unreasonable attitude of the British officers outside Bengal.

To enable the middle classes in Bengal to ventilate their grievances, Sambhu Chandra joined hands with Shishir Kumar Ghosh, Durga Mohan Das, Ananda Mohan Basu, Narendranath Sen, Nabagopal Mitra and others in establishing the Indian League in September 1875. He became its President. Because of his political experience, he was called "Guruji" by W. C. Bonnerjee and A. O. Hume.

Sambhu Chandra did his best for the retention of the ill-fated Ilbert Bill of 1883, which was designed to extend the jurisdiction of Indian Magistrates over European offenders. The Bill was actually initiated in a minute by B. L. Gupta, the Police Magistrate of Calcutta, who, though a member of the Covenanted Civil Service, felt keenly the indignity of not being able to preside over the trial of European British subjects because of his race and colour. But Europeans started a tearing campaign against the promulgation of the Bill. Dr. W. H. Russell, writing to Sambhu Chandra, said that "all the powers of opiumdom and indigodom were ranged against it". Indians set on foot a counter-agitation in support of the Bill both in India and England. They wanted the unconstitutional distinction

"between the Indian subject and the European citizen" to go. In England, Sambhu Chandra's friends, Major Evan Bell, Colonel Osborn, Hodgson Pratt and Dr. W. H. Russell went on exposing, denouncing and ridiculing the opponents of the Bill day after day. But, in spite of all the efforts of the pro-Bill agitators, the Government ultimately caved in and withdrew the Bill. The triumph of the European racialists was complete. This provoked Sambhu Chandra to suggest in 1886 that the Legal Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council should be an Indian. Though the suggestion fell on deaf ears, it had the effect of making Indians increasingly conscious of their rights as well as of the gross injustices on which the Government thrived.

The disillusioned patriot, whose faith in the British system of constitutional government was rudely shaken, declined the offer of a title made to him by Sir Steuart Bayley, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. He preferred to be a Fellow of the University of Calcutta rather than an honourable member of the titled gentry in the country.

ADVOCATE OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Sambhu Chandra was a foe of fanaticism. He never subscribed to the belief that there was no excellent thought beyond the pale of Hinduism. Because of his broad sympathies, he was equally liked by Europeans and Muslims. In fact, Muslims were to be found among his closest friends. Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur was his inseparable friend. They had been like brothers for over thirty years. Practically alone among Hindu politicians, he sympathized with the Muslims and helped them to hold a public meeting under the presidency of Nawab Abdul Latif Bahadur at the time of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877. He tried all his life "to make the two sects appreciate each other so as to weld them together into a nation". Beloved and revered, Sambhu Chandra's death was treated as "a national loss" by the Muslims. Maulavi Syed Mahommed Khan wrote: "Our community is indeed unfortunate. . . I have not known any living Hindu who took such great and sincere interest in the cause of Mahommedans and who was so heartily venerated by that community. Dr. Mookerjee's name was a household word in every Mahommedan home. . ."

A LIBERAL REFORMER

That a liberal like Sambhu Chandra would extend his support to the Age of Consent Bill of 1872 was natural. He felt that it did

not interfere with Hinduism, which was elastic enough to stand "any amount of clipping, especially in its dead twigs and leaves".

A SELFLESS PATRIOT

A selfless patriot, Sambhu Chandra had good reasons to express his ideas in English. Mr. Meredith Townsend, a scholar who had edited a Bengali journal while in Calcutta, wrote to Sambhu Chandra from London in February 1883, pointing out the futility of his preference for publishing in a foreign tongue instead of making a literature by writing in Bengali. Sambhu Chandra sent a spirited reply. He stated: "We might have created one of the finest literatures in the world, without making any impression in the camp of our British rulers and, of course, without advancing our political or even social status". He then asserted that Bengalees had a very rich and respectable literature, but all this had not helped them one whit or rescued them from their degradation. Hence they were compelled to take to journalism and authorship in a foreign tongue. Sambhu Chandra himself had to do so at an enormous personal sacrifice, for the use of English by him did not assure him of a bright future. He concluded that those who cultivated Bengali would be remembered by their countrymen, but those who, like himself, wrote in English would have to make their sacrifice for the Fatherland.

Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee's interest and researches in homoeopathy earned him the degree of M.D. from an American University. But, as described by the Rev. K. M. Banerjea, he was "a de facto Doctor of Literature and a profound observer and judge of men". He died on 7 February 1894.

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KALI PRASANNA SINGHA

A literary genius, Kali Prasanna Singha, the only son of Nandalal Singha of Jorasanko, was born in 1840 with a silver spoon in his mouth. Educated at home and then at the Hindu College, which he left without completing his studies, his literary talents showed great promise while he was still in his teens. His irreproachable integrity and his growing influence and reputation in society persuaded the Government to appoint him in 1863 as Honorary Magistrate and Justice of the Peace in Calcutta. That he carried a wise head on young shoulders was demonstrably proved on more than one occasion by his well-balanced and impartial judgments. In discharging his judicial duties he evinced a great public spirit. He was a terror to both "Bengali villains and European rogues".

PATRIOTIC LOVE FOR THE VERNACULAR

It is amazing to see him take the lead in establishing the *Bidyotshahinee Sabha* in 1853 when he had just entered his teens. Its aim was to promote the cultivation of the Bengali language and its literature. This Sabha, of which Kali Prasanna was the first Secretary as well as the livewire, had among its members such eminent men as Peary Chand Mitra, Kristo Das Pal, Radhanath Vidyaratna, Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya and Umesh Chandra Mallick. Scholarly papers, dealing with trade and commerce, the dignity of labour, the evil customs of Bengal, etc, were read at the well-attended meetings of the Sabha. To encourage greater devotion to the Bengali language, essay competitions were held from time to time and eminent men of letters were accorded warm receptions by the members of the Sabha. On 12 February 1861, Michael Madhusudan Dutt was offered hearty felicitations at a Sabha meeting for having introduced blank verse into Bengali poetry. Kali Prasanna, who was a great admirer of Michael Madhusudan, made effective use of blank verse in his poems also.

There was, indeed, an unmistakable touch of patriotism in all his endeavours to awaken his countrymen to the need of serving their mother tongue. In April 1857, he financed the establishment of the *Bidyotshahinee Theatre*, which staged Bengali dramas written by him. He edited some Bengali journals, namely, the *Bidyotshahinee Patrika*, the *Sarbatattwa Prakasika*, and the *Paridarsak*, with the same end in view. The first three were monthlies and the last a daily.

His own works, including dramas, poems, translations and ironical sketches, constituted no mean contribution to the development of Bengali literature. If he excelled in sarcasm in his *Hutum Pechar Naksha*, he also gave convincing proof of his profound scholarship in his Bengali translation of the *Mahabharata*, which was the magnum opus of his literary efforts.

EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

To help the spread of both vernacular and English education and enlightenment among his countrymen, he not only gave financial aid to many schools but also established six free schools on his own. Prizes were awarded by him to students to encourage them in their studies, and a public library was opened at Jorasanko to stimulate their reading habit.

His interest in education had an agricultural bias. It led him to suggest, in his speech delivered at the David Hare Commemoration meeting on 1 June 1863, that agricultural schools should be established in a planned manner to promote the cause of improved farming in the country. This effort could be fortified by the organization of agricultural fairs from time to time. As a member of the Agri-Horticultural Society, he took more than an academic interest in the condition of agriculture in Bengal.

In efficiently-edited journals he found a very good means of diffusing knowledge in the country. The *Sarbatattwa Prakasika*, for instance, was devoted to the publication of lucidly-written Bengali articles on zoology, geology, geography, art and literature. The *Bibidharta Sangraha*, the first six numbers of which were edited by Rajendralal Mitra and which received the Vernacular Translation Society's collaboration, served the same purpose. English journals, like the 'Hindoo Patriot' and 'Mookerjee's Magazine', and the Urdu newspaper, *Doorbin*, all of which helped the diffusion of knowledge and enlightenment among Indians, received Kali Prasanna's generous patronage.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Actuated by his eagerness to regenerate society, Kali Prasanna boldly assisted Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar when the latter started his agitation for widow remarriage. Apart from wholeheartedly supporting the cause in his *Bidyotsabinee Patrika*, he was instrumental in collecting more than 3,000 signatures for the petition that was sent

to the Legislative Council in its defence. After the promulgation of Act XV of 1856, which legalized widow remarriage, Kali Prasanna declared in the *Sambad Prabhakar* of 22 November of the same year that the *Bidyotsabinee Sabha* would give Rs. 1,000 to every person who agreed to marry a widow. He, then, personally came forward to help Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar in arranging widow remarriages in Bengal.

Kali Prasanna was also at one with Vidyasagar on the necessity of abolishing the evil custom of polygamy in Bengal. He joined the agitation initiated by the learned Pandit and signed the second anti-polygamy petition that was sent to the Government on 1 February 1866. Though no tangible results were produced by this agitation, it none the less succeeded in focussing the attention of the intelligent public on one of the festering sores of Hindu society.

Another social problem which engaged the attention of Kali Prasanna was the need of a law to compel fallen women to transfer themselves to places outside the city. The existence of brothels in localities where gentlemen lived tended to undermine the morals of both the young and the old. To abolish these sinks of immorality, situated in the heart of Calcutta, he made the *Bidyotsabinee Sabha* submit a petition to the Legislative Council. And with a view to creating a strong public opinion on the problem he had the petition published in the *Sambad Prabhakar* on 19 November 1856.

The custom of child marriage also came to be severely condemned by him. He became conscious of the iniquity of the custom while he was in his teens.

In his funeral eulogy on Harish Chandra Mukherjee, he exhorted his wealthy countrymen to shed their indolence and work selflessly for the welfare of society. They were told that they could best serve the interests of their motherland, not by indulging in spending sprees, for the sake of prestige, on *sraddh* ceremonies and marriages, but by unstintedly using their resources in aid of schools, the poor and widows.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The patriot in Kali Prasanna could not tolerate the discriminatory policy of the British Government. Every fibre in his being seemed to have revolted against it while he was in his teens. In one of the early numbers of the *Bidyotsabinee Patrika* he praised the English for aiding the diffusion of enlightenment in the country, but

at the same time scathingly criticized them for their discriminatory policy which debarred Bengalees, even if they were as well educated as Englishmen, from holding any high office under the Government. He regretted that a Bengalee doing the same work as an Englishman was paid less. In spite of all his education and efficiency, he could never aspire to attain equality with an Englishman in any position in the administration. He then held up the example of Emperor Akbar and pointed out that under him any man deemed competent, irrespective of his caste or religion, could assume the responsibility of the most important office in the State. This apart, the deliberate exclusion of Indian representatives from the Governor-General's Council also came to be severely condemned by him. Passing laws without consulting Indian opinion was a practice which boded ill for the country. Very outspoken in his criticism, he wrote that as long as the British Government persisted in its policy of discrimination it should be ashamed of calling itself a civilized government. Later, by his efficient discharge of judicial responsibilities as an Honorary Magistrate he proved that educated Indians were competent to hold the highest offices under the Government.

Kali Prasanna's espousal of the cause of the ryots oppressed by the European planters was no mean contribution to the awakening of political consciousness among his countrymen. His favourable review of Dinabandhu Mitra's sensational drama, *Nil Darpan*, in the *Bibidharta Sangraha* made the Government withdraw its patronage from this respectable monthly. This did not, however, make him flinch from the cause he had taken up. He gave ample proof of his courage of conviction when he rushed to the Supreme Court to pay the fine of Rs. 1,000 which the Rev. James Long was asked to pay, in addition to serving the sentence of imprisonment for one month, on the conclusion of his farcical trial, on 24 July 1861, at the hands of Justices Peacock and Wells. The trial was held over Long's publication of the English translation of *Nil Darpan*. Though the result of the trial pleased the blood-thirsty European planters, it became a cause of anger and discontent among the educated Bengalees. What they could not particularly stomach was the aspersion cast by Justice Sir Mordaunt Wells on Bengalees in course of the trial. He had called them liars and cheats. To register their protest against the unbecoming language of Justice Wells a meeting was held at the residence of Radhakanta Deb on 26 August 1861. In the presence of the agitated elite of the Hindu society Kali

Prasanna delivered a fiery speech against Wells and the farcical trial that he had held. The meeting over, Kali Prasanna Singha cooperated with Ramgopal Ghosh, Debendranath Tagore, Jatindramohan Tagore, Ramanath Tagore and others in drawing up and sending a Memorial (18 September 1861) to Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, on behalf of the British Indian Association. Wood's reply to the Governor-General, dated 24 December 1861, sent a thrill down the spine of the agitators against Wells, who was taken to task for abusing his high judicial office by making "hasty imputations against a whole people" in course of his denunciation of a crime. In perspective, the trial of Long and the subsequent castigation of Wells appear to have been a definite landmark in the history of the awakening of political consciousness in Bengal. The patriotic role played in it by young Kali Prasanna was, indeed, inspiring.

Incomparable in accomplishments, magnanimous and patriotic, Kali Prasanna, who combined profound scholarship with competence to lead, died on 24 July 1870. To renascent Bengal, just beginning to feel the throb of a new life, his premature death at the age of 30 was an irreparable loss.

"One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name".

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DWIJENDRANATH TAGORE

Eccentric but talented, Dwijendranath Tagore, the eldest son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, was born on 11 March 1840. He was educated at St. Paul's School and the Hindu College, called Presidency College from 1855. He left College in 1855 without completing his studies.

LOVE FOR THE VERNACULAR

The atmosphere in which he was brought up helped him to develop a deep and abiding love for the vernacular literature. He

proved by his writings that Bengali was the only medium through which his countrymen could best express their sentiments and feelings. As editor of the shortlived *Bharati* and of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika*, he endeavoured to promote the Bengali language and its literature. The same purpose was tried to be furthered by him as a member of the *Saraswat Samaj* of which Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya was for some time the Vice-President.

In his zeal to advance the cause of the Bengali language he introduced the first shorthand system in Bengali, which was published in the form of a pamphlet. Some of his poems were also written in Bengali shorthand.

A NATIONALIST

A poet and virile thinker, who accepted only those values of Hindu life, together with Hindu manners and customs, which passed the test of reason, Dwijendranath was a progressive with a very rational outlook, which was as hostile to any sign of fetishism in the orthodox group as to irrationalism among the English-educated people. When Rajnarayan Basu talked of reviving Hinduism in all its pristine glory, Dwijendranath opined that special care should be taken to prevent the revival of what was unsuitable for the age. He detested not only the bigotry of the 'Aryas' (Hindus) but also the Anglicism of the English-educated. The use of European clothes by Indians and their fulsome imitation of European manners and customs could not but excite ridicule in him.

He was a patriot *sui generis*. His patriotism bore no trace of the influence of any Western country. He was an Indian first and last, and did everything in the Indian way. Thus, to wean away the English-educated from pseudo-Anglicism and to inspire in them a feeling of nationalism, he participated, together with Nabagopal Mitra, Ganendranath Tagore, Jyotirindranath Tagore and others, in the great cooperative endeavour to inaugurate the *Chaitra* or *Hindu Mela* (also called *Swadeshi Mela*) at Belgachia on 12 April 1867.

This first 'National Gathering', like all others until 1881, was highlighted by a national agricultural and industrial fair, in addition to national games and exercises and the singing of national songs. The tremendous enthusiasm created for the *Mela* all over the country invested it with the character of an annual national festival.

During the first three years Ganendranath Tagore was the Secretary of the *Mela*, with Nabagopal Mitra working as Assistant

Secretary. After Ganendranath's death in May 1869, Dwijendranath was elected Secretary, and he zealously worked in this capacity for four years from 1870 to 1873 and for another year in 1879. His famous national song, *Malina Mukha-candrama Bharat tomar* (Bharat, your moon-like face is gloomy...), sung at the *Mela* virtually immortalized him in the hearts of his countrymen.

The resounding success of the *Swadeshi Mela* encouraged its sponsors to establish the 'National Society', wherein national problems were discussed once every month. Dwijendranath was a member of its Managing Committee. In 1874, he was elected its Vice-President.

His was a life dedicated to learning as well as to worthy causes which tended to promote the interests of the country. His generous aid to the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science shows how keenly interested he was in advancing the cause of science in Bengali (in June 1881, the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* requested Dr. Mahendranath Tagore to spread scientific knowledge in the vernacular). Dwijendranath Tagore passed away at Santiniketan on 19 January 1926.

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SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSH

"A true political saint", at whose feet Lokmanya Tilak (Bal Gangadhar) proudly declared to have learnt many lessons on politics, Shishir Kumar Ghosh was, indeed, a unique combination of *Karmayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga*—of action and meditation, of love and sympathy thrown into clear relief by his spirit of dedication.

The third son of Harinarayan Ghosh, a successful pleader, Shishir Kumar Ghosh was born at Palua-Magura in Jessore in 1840. He read for some time at the local school and then came to Calcutta and entered the Colootala Branch School (later known as Hare School), from where he passed with credit the Entrance Examination in 1857.

Subsequently, he studied at the Presidency College for a brief period and returned home to be immersed in matters, which steadily guided his footsteps towards leadership and fame.

After working for some time as correspondent of the 'Hindoo Patriot', he became immensely interested in journalism. In 1862, he went to Calcutta to learn the mechanism of printing, bought a wooden printing press for Rs. 32/- and had it installed at his home town for publishing his fortnightly journal, *Amrita Prabakini*, which was in circulation from December 1862 to December 1863. Straitened circumstances following his father's death forced him to close down the press and take to teaching in schools at Konnagar and Sarkhira. Because of his sincere work in schools, he was appointed (on the recommendation of Bhudev Chandra Mukhopadhyaya) Deputy Inspector of Schools on Rs. 75/- per month. But James Munro, the District Magistrate of Jessore, soon took a liking to him and appointed him Income-tax Assessor on a higher salary. But he lost his new job, because he had not formally resigned his previous one.

He took to journalism again with the launching of a new vernacular paper, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, on 20 February 1868. On 25 February 1869 it became bilingual, with the inclusion of some English articles in it. But natural calamities forced him to migrate with his family to Calcutta, where, from 21 December 1871, he started the publication of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. On 21 March 1878, that is, within a week of the promulgation of the Vernacular Press Act, the journal was converted into an entirely English weekly. It was long after his retirement from active editorship that the paper began to be issued as a daily from 19 February 1891 under the effective management of his younger brother, Moti Lal Ghosh. The introduction of the Age of Consent Bill, against which the Ghosh brothers were pitted, necessitated the conversion of the paper into a daily.

A progressive Brahmo at the beginning, Shishir Kumar left the *Brahmo Samaj* in 1869, because of the steady growth among its members of the practice of worshipping Keshab Chandra Sen. He could not reconcile himself to the idea of Keshab Chandra Sen being deified as a sort of Christ. After that, he became associated with the Theosophical Society started in Bombay by Madame Blavatsky and Olcott. When this also failed to satisfy his spiritual urge, he finally cast his anchor in Vaishnavism and became a powerful revivalist of that faith in the interests of the decadent society in Bengal.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Hardly in his twenties, Shishir Kumar, as the Jessore correspondent of the 'Hindoo Patriot' from 1859 to 1860, stung the conscience of the British officials by his graphic reports on the oppression practised by European indigo planters and their Bengalee dewans on the ryots in Jessore and Nadia. He moved from village to village in Jessore and Nadia, sometimes by boat, encouraging the ryots to unite in their resolve not to cultivate indigo anymore on their lands. The ryots, about half a million in number, who were first encouraged to go on strike by a letter of Ashley Eden from Baraset to the effect that the cultivation of indigo on their part was a voluntary affair, were led by Bishnucharan Biswas and Digambar Biswas of Chaugacha in Jessore.

To the ryots Shishir Kumar was known as *Sinni Baba* (God-sent father), and to the educated public as 'M.L.L.', under which pseudonym he wrote about their persecuted life in the 'Hindoo Patriot'. Challenging Mr. Forlong's statements before the Indigo Commission that the ryots in the indigo districts were contented and prosperous, he said, in his letter to the 'Hindoo Patriot' of 22 August 1860, that not even "a hundredth part of the actual oppression" had been reported to the Commission. To quench their thirst for revenge and gain, planters had the ryots' houses burnt, their women stripped of their clothes and violated in the open and forced to work in the place of the men who had run away. Messrs. Oates and Oman were pointedly referred to by Shishir Kumar as the most oppressive among the planters, who were given full protection by such Magistrates as Molony and Skinner. The ryots looked down upon Molony as *Baro Patramara Saheb* and Skinner as *Choto Patramara Saheb*. Both of them shamelessly lived on the bounty of the equally shameless planters.

While praising the grit of the passive resisters, he wished the Indigo Commission had visited the indigo districts to understand properly the gravity of the situation that had arisen there. Obviously worked up at the sight of the unrestricted persecution of the ryots, he wrote: "Shame to the English Government which winks at such tyrannical proceedings. Woe to their heavenly religion."

A fearless and outspoken denouncer of wrongs, Shishir Kumar effectively used his journal, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, to unravel the truth about any situation that arose involving the interests of his helpless countrymen. If in his endeavour to defend the right and the

just through his paper the flames of racial hostility came to be fed further, it was not he who was to blame for that, but the British themselves. Since he dearly loved his countrymen, he pointed out that the chief purpose of his journal was to make his countrymen aware of the degrading conditions of life to which they had been reduced by the British. From 3 December 1874 he began to issue a weekly special edition which, in addition to giving gists of reports published in other Indian newspapers, ventilated the distress and grievances of Indians for the knowledge of those who counted in the public life of England.

Within a short time of its publication the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* became the eyesore of the authorities in Jessore. It met with heavy weather as a result of publishing, in June 1868, two articles, which exposed the lustful behaviour of Mr. Wright, the Subdivisional Officer of Jhenada, towards a woman witness and asked the Government to look into the case. This brought the whole European community together. Actively helped by Munro, Wright filed a libel suit against Shishir Kumar Ghosh, Chandranath Roy (the printer) and Rajkrishna Mitra, head clerk of the Faujdari Court. Though Manomohan Ghosh came to defend them, he found to his dismay that the local people were unwilling to bear witness owing to their fear of Wright. Even Mr. Chapman, Commissioner of the Presidency Division, did not hesitate to intimidate them in the interests of Wright, who was kept at his station in spite of the public demand for his transfer. Lawford, the District Judge, acquitted Shishir Kumar, but sentenced Chandranath and Rajkrishna to six months' and one year's imprisonment respectively. Rajkrishna had also to pay a fine of Rs. 1,000. A vain appeal was made to the High Court against these sentences.

The palpable unfairness of the English system of justice caused greater discontent when the Government met all expenses incurred by Wright in connection with the libel suit and transferred him to Midnapore after the case had been finally decided in his favour. This provoked Shishir Kumar, who, however, found in the whole incident enough evidence of the growing spirit of resistance to British oppression among the Bengalees, into proclaiming, in his editorial of 31 December 1868, that his countrymen could no longer be browbeaten or intimidated into submission by the British officials. In another editorial of 29 July 1869, he warned the British that one single act of oppression of theirs not only created thousands of

enemies for them in India, but also washed away the merits of all their previous good deeds. Every oppressive act of a mofussil magistrate was a blow delivered at the foundation of the British empire, and, as he pointed out with prophetic vision, the greater the anger of the people the briefer became the life-expectancy of this empire.

Shishir Kumar's *Patrika* soon became the mouthpiece of the educated middle classes in Bengal. As the zamindar-members of the British Indian Association could not properly represent the interests of the people and as no representative could be found from among the peasants still steeped in ignorance, he felt that the Government should learn to pay proper attention to the views of the educated and conscious middle classes, who exercised the greatest influence in Bengal through the district political associations formed since 1872 in Dacca, Burdwan, Santipur, Ranaghat, Krishnagar, Berhampore, Jessore, Khulna, Rajshahi, Hooghly, Barisal and Mymensingh. Both Shishir Kumar and his brother, Hemanta Kumar, who often undertook arduous journeys, helped the organization of these associations, which were meant to represent local views to the Government on every intended legislation. "Voluntary assessors of the legislation of India", these associations offered very good ground for the political training of the people of Bengal.

These associations were actually a reply to the closed-door policy of the British Indian Association, which had turned down in 1870 the proposal of Shishir Kumar to reduce its monthly subscription from Rs. 50 to Rs. 5 in order to accommodate the middle classes. He went further and, with the assistance of Ananda Mohan Basu, Durga Mohan Das, Dr. Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee and others, established the Indian League on 25 September 1875 as a middle class political organization for the whole country. Apart from promoting the political and other interests of the masses, the League was dedicated to furthering a feeling of nationalism among the people as well as to increasing the wealth of the country. In opposition to the British Indian Association, it fully supported Sir Richard Temple in introducing the system of election in the constitution of the Calcutta Municipality in 1876. On the eve of the election to the Calcutta Corporation in 1882 he asked the rate-payers to look upon their franchise as a "sacred commission".

As a matter of fact, long before Temple proposed the system of election, Shishir Kumar advocated its introduction in the district municipalities. If these municipalities were allowed to have elected

chairmen (not magistrates as chairmen), then the people would not grudge the imposition of fresh taxes. These municipalities, with wide powers over local education and sanitation, constituted the best form of local self-government for the people. They could teach the people not only to manage their own affairs within their limited resources, but also to resist oppression of all kinds, social, political and economic, without looking up to the British for help and guidance. Shishir Kumar felt that local self-government, if allowed to develop unhindered, might form the nucleus of the political freedom of the nation. And to help its smooth development, he not only demanded more powers for the District Boards, but also the revival of the old *panchayats*, which should be allowed to have elected headmen empowered by Government to deal with all petty offences.

However, as a political organization, the League, of which Shishir Kumar himself was the Assistant Secretary, did not long survive the establishment of the Indian Association in July 1876. Though the League vanished, Shishir Kumar's Patrika remained to continue prodding his countrymen to take an increasing interest in the social and political affairs of India.

The Jhikargacha Conference of 1885 was an eloquent testimony to the political consciousness created among the people of Jessore by the efforts of Shishir Kumar and his brothers, Hemanta Kumar and Moti Lal. The Conference was preceded by hundreds of village meetings at which the humble folk were urged to discard their apathy and take an active interest in the political, economic and social problems of the country. As reported by the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 15 May 1901, the Midnapore Provincial Conference of the same year was a great success, because it followed the Jhikargacha pattern.

AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST

His broad political vision, his three-dimensional outlook on Indian affairs, enabled him to see in clear perspective the danger that threatened the British empire. The anger of the people aroused by the unjust acts of the British officials constituted the danger. He had shown this in connection with the misdeeds of Wright, the Sub-divisional Officer of Jhenada. He drove home this point not only while condemning Capt. Cowen's ruthless suppression of the Kokas (Namdhari Sikh disciples of Guru Ram Singh) in 1871-72, but also while severely criticizing British action in deposing Malhar Rao, the Gaekwad of Baroda, in 1875 on grounds which did not warrant such

punishment. In the case of the latter the real object of the British Crown, as revealed by the Imperial Darbar of 1877, was to declare its paramountcy over the princes of India.

To him, rebels against the British Government were patriots. This attitude explains his sympathy and support not only for the rising of the Rampa hillmen of Madras Presidency, but also for that of Ramoosees of Sholapur under the leadership of Hari Nayek, who was executed, and Wassudeo Balwant Phadke, who was transported for life. Proud of Phadke, he wanted his countrymen to love their country as Phadke did.

ADVOCATE OF PARLIAMENTARY RULE

A keen student of international affairs, appreciating the autonomy granted by Britain to Canada and Australia, Shishir Kumar advocated as early as 1870 the establishment of a parliament in India. Indians, he argued, had all the characteristics of a nation. If they were allowed to have a parliament of their own, it would lighten the burden of the English people. To him, this was a very reasonable demand, since the Legislative Councils did not represent the people in any way. His real object was the achievement of 'Home Rule' for India, a dispensation under which the tax-payers could decide the mode of taxation and the form of legislation to be adopted in the interests of the country.

A CRITIC OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

The policy of Sir George Campbell to exclude educated Bengalees from responsible posts was scathingly criticized by Shishir Kumar. Besides, the administration set up in the country was very expensive. He thus suggested that the Services should be gradually Indianized. He wrote on 21 April 1870 that 130 European Officers, performing the duties of Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Judicial Commissioners, etc., drew the sum of Rs. 2,537,800 annually from the State. He firmly believed that 130 Indian officers of equal merit could perform the same duties "for the tenth part of the above sum". He urged that the Government must give up the policy of importing richly-paid English officers "to perform the commonest duties of the state", if the finances of the country were to be kept stable and healthy.

Military expenditure also needed to be curtailed in the interests of the administration. This apart, the costliness of law-courts in

the country made him exhort the Bengalees to set up indigenous arbitration courts under the name of *Salisi* boards. This had already been done in Poona by Mahadeva Ranade. These boards, he pointed out, could easily save the litigants not only heavy expenses but much labour as well.

He placed the same problem before the Government and asked them to revive the old *panchayat* system in Bengal in the interests of the poor ryots, who were invariably reduced to helplessness in a court of law by the rich zamindars.

DEFENDER OF CIVIL LIBERTY

Shishir Kumar held that the Criminal Procedure Code, the Dramatic Performances Act, the Press Act and the Arms Act gave the magistrate "absolute control over the rights of the people". Even the Moghuls, he complained, did not take away the right of the people to bear arms.

To him, the Criminal Procedure Act of 1859, the Criminal Law (Act XLV) of 1860, Evidence Act I and Criminal Procedure Act X of 1872 were a menace to the liberty of the people. Since justice in courts of law in India was not cheap and impartial, the civil liberties of the people came to be further endangered. Without establishing absolute equality between Europeans and Indians in the eye of the law, courts in India, he felt, could not be freed from the taint of *partiality*.

CHAMPION OF THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

With Surendranath Banerjea and others, Shishir Kumar also emerged as a fearless champion of the freedom of the Press in 1878. As a matter of fact, he had pointed out as early as 1874 that the chief function of the Indian Press was to promote the interests of the people by opposing ill-conceived Government measures. Newspapers offered the people the best instrument with which they could fight the government. The freedom of the Press was also the best guarantee of good government. It enabled the government to know the causes of popular discontent and to bring their policy more in line with the desires and interests of the people.

With the promulgation of the Vernacular Press Act on 14 March 1878, Shishir Kumar converted his Patrika within a week into a purely English journal in order to evade the restrictions of the undemocratic Act of Lytton. Then, in a series of articles he trenchantly

criticized the Act, without, however, failing to convince the Government of the utility of having a free Press. Lord Ripon realized it and had the Act repealed in 1882 to the immense relief of all.

SUPPORTER OF INDIAN INDUSTRY

Shishir Kumar believed that India could attain prosperity only by systematic industrialization. Thus, unless Indians took to industry, their country would remain poor. When, in 1875, the people of Dacca decided to boycott Manchester textile goods, he exhorted them to combine and establish textile mills in the country. It was his belief that if Indians ceased to patronize English goods made of Indian raw material, Englishmen might ultimately decide to leave India in their hands and go away.

The adoption of the policy of free trade by the Government under the pressure of the textile magnates of Manchester was condemned by him. Infant Indian industries, particularly the textile industry of Bombay, needed Government protection.

PROMOTER OF EDUCATION

Shishir Kumar was a merciless critic of Sir George Campbell's education policy, which tried to promote primary education in Bengal at the cost of higher education. He felt that higher education was necessary for the middle-class youths, who were always eager to work for improving the political status of the country.

He vehemently protested against the abolition of the Krishnagar and Berhampore Government Colleges and inspired the people to organize as many as sixty protest meetings all over Bengal. Campbell unknowingly paid a tribute to the political temperament of the middle-class youths when he declared that imparting higher education to them meant sowing the seeds of sedition among them. With the abandonment of Campbell's policy by Sir Richard Temple from 1875, Shishir Kumar also gave up his attitude of distrust. The revival of the old colleges and the establishment of new institutions gratified him very much.

But it is interesting to note that Shishir Kumar was an advocate of imparting higher education through the vernacular medium, without, however, lowering the standard. Education imparted through the English medium did not help the mind of an average learner to reach the subject matter. That apart, the English medium tended to make learning the monopoly of a few only. It helped the formation

of a new caste, "full of pedantry and superficial ideas" and completely cut off from the people. It was ruinous to the nation, as it did not allow knowledge to take root in the national mind.

Shishir Kumar was not, however, opposed to the cultivation of the English language. What he actually wanted was its study "as a subject in itself", just as peoples of other countries studied languages foreign to them. This was made clear by him in his Patrika editorial of 27 March 1884.

He was also an advocate of technical education. He proposed in 1875, with an eye to the industrial development of the country, the establishment of a college of technology in Bengal. Students, with some general education, would be eligible for study therein. The tentative college curriculum published by him provided for a 5-year theoretical course of study to be followed by practical training in workshops connected with cloth manufactures, weaving, bleaching, dyeing, printing, silk and jute manufactures, etc. The 'Albert Temple of Science', an industrial school established in Calcutta by the Indian League with the help of Sir Richard Temple, was designed to promote this purpose of Shishir Kumar.

For the peasants, however, Shishir Kumar wanted a practical education which would help them to improve the soil and their method of cultivation.

A SOCIAL REFORMER

He could never reconcile himself to the idea of his countrymen losing their identity by aping English manners and customs. Such imitation of foreign customs prevented the growth of patriotism in their hearts. "We are we and they are they"—these words clearly reflected his aversion for Anglicization.

He was a keen supporter of widow remarriage, which, sanctioned by the Shastras in the past, was declared valid in the eye of the law by Act XV of 1856. To him, if a man did not lose his caste by visiting brothels, then there was no possibility of his losing his caste, either, by marrying a widow. In his Patrika editorial of 11 March 1869 he gave a heart-rending description of the distress of the widows. By neglecting them as well as by allowing their number to multiply, Hindus, he warned, were helping the spread of moral degeneration in society.

Forcing women to live in seclusion was disliked by him. As a member of the progressive Brahmo group, he felt that women should

be educated and enlightened and allowed to come out of their seclusion in the interests of the cause of social regeneration. Even as a Vaishnavite, he clung to this opinion.

His *Amiya-Nimai Charit* in six volumes, published between the years 1882 and 1911, and his 'Lord Gauranga or Salvation for all' in two volumes in English, published in 1897 and 1898, carried a great message for the social regeneration of Bengal. The neo-Vaishnavic movement initiated by him was practically a revolt against the domination of the Brahmins and the caste system.

Regeneration or national awakening was also the watchword of the National Theatre, opened in Calcutta on 7 December 1872. In February 1873, he was elected as one of its directors. The aims of this Theatre, which staged two of his comedies, were fully supported by him.

To promote social cohesion and self-reliance, he asked the Bengalees, in an article of 26 September 1878, to establish an organization on the model of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, which, as a comprehensively representative body, had proved to be an effective organ of the whole Mahratta community.

Shishir Kumar virtually retired from active politics as well as from the management of the Patrika after 1878. He, however, continued to take a keen interest in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress as well as in other matters which had a bearing on the destiny of the country. Himself a patriot, he inspired those who came into contact with him to become patriotic also. Nabin Chandra Sen openly acknowledged the inspiration he received from Shishir Kumar Ghosh before writing his *Palasir Yuddha*. Revered as a great national leader, Shishir Kumar Ghosh passed away on 10 January 1911. A great soul, he fully deserved the title 'Mahatma' conferred upon him by his grateful countrymen.

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PEARYMOHAN MUKHOPADHYAYA

Born on 17 September 1840, Pearymohan Mukhopadhyaya was the son of Jay Krishna Mukhopadhyaya, the reputed zamindar of Uttarpara. An M.A. and B.L. of the Calcutta University, he practised for some time in the Calcutta High Court before becoming a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1879. Later, in 1884 and 1886, he was nominated a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. During this period his speeches on the Bengal Tenancy Bill showed his perfect knowledge of the subject under discussion.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Government honours bestowed on him, like Raja and C.S.I., could not diminish his interest in the cause of the political progress of the country. Intimately associated with the British Indian Association, of which he was President for one year, he often eagerly came forward to participate in political movements sponsored by his countrymen. He took an active part in the second National Conference held in Calcutta from 25 to 27 December 1885. At the end of the Conference he, on behalf of its delegates, sent a telegram to Bombay, wishing success to the efforts of the founding-members of the Indian National Congress. A moderate, he believed in promoting the political progress of the country through constitutional means.

He died in 1922.

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UMESH CHANDRA DATTA

Son of Haramohan Datta, Umesh Chandra Datta was born on 16 December 1840 at Majilpur in the 24-Parganas. Though harassed by poverty, he worked hard, in the midst of his exacting preoccupation of teaching, to become a graduate in 1897. His experience as headmaster at Harinabhi and Konnagar led to his appointment as the first Headmaster of the City School established by Sivanath Sastri and his friends in Calcutta in 1879.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

A progressive Brahmo affiliated to the *Sadbaran Brahmo Samaj*, Umesh Chandra sincerely believed that there could not be any enduring social regeneration without the spread of education among women. Thus, in his eagerness to further the cause of female education, he took an active interest in the progress of the Brahmo Balika Vidyalaya and the Bethune College. Besides, as editor of the *Bamabodhinee Patrika*, he tried his best to make women conscious of the intelligent role they had to play in society for its rejuvenation.

Public interest in the cause of social reform was considerably aroused by writings in the *Bharat Samskarak*, of which Umesh Chandra was the editor. Originally started as an organ of Keshab Chandra Sen's Indian Reform Association, the journal passed under the control of the *Sadbaran Brahmo Samaj* after 1878.

A man of character and progressive views, Umesh Chandra Datta died on 19 June 1907.

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NABAGOPAL MITRA

Nabagopal Mitra was one of the most articulate and zealous apostles of nationalism in Bengal in the second half of the nineteenth century. He was born about 1840 (?). Though he was Satyendranath Tagore's classmate at the Hindu School, very little is known about his formal education. His "ungrammatical and unidiomatic English" did not, however, stand in the way of his attaining eminence in society as a man of inspiring ideas and of equally inspiring action. Attracted by the liberal ideas of Debendranath Tagore, whose residence he frequently visited, he joined the *Adi Brahmo Samaj* and soon became an important member of the *Tattwabodhini Sabha*.

Nabagopal's family residence was at the junction of Cornwallis Street and Sankar Ghosh Lane. Near his house he had a gymnastic school where physical training was imparted to young men coming from the University and the districts of Bengal. He also maintained a well-stocked stable where many young men came to learn horse-

riding. This stable was widely known as Nabagopal's circus. But the maintenance of the stable cost the national-minded patriot so much that he was ultimately compelled to take service in the Calcutta Corporation as a Licence Officer. However, his attempts to develop the younger generation's physique in the larger interests of the country did not go in vain.

APOSTLE OF NATIONALISM

In the successful promotion of a feeling of nationalism among his countrymen lies Nabagopal's most enduring contribution to the history of political awakening in Bengal. In this sphere of activity he was deeply influenced by Rajnarayan Basu's 'Prospectus for the Promotion of National Feeling among the Educated Natives of Bengal' (1866), which proposed the establishment of what was termed 'The Nationality Promotion Society' to wean away educated Hindus from Anglicism by encouraging them to use on all occasions their own vernacular and to develop their national arts, industries and physical exercises in such a way as to advance the interests of the country. It was not religion but the cohesion of the Hindus in every department of national life that came to be stressed in the Prospectus.

The need to create a feeling of nationality led Nabagopal to launch on 7 August 1865, under the auspices of Debendranath Tagore, his journal called the 'National Paper'. Its purpose was to stem the tide of denationalization by making the educated youths realize that national progress could not be made dependent on things borrowed from foreigners. He was at one with Rajnarayan Basu on the necessity of using the Hindu religion to create unity and a feeling of nationality among the Hindus in the country. This feeling would embrace, as he wrote on 2 October 1872, the whole of India, transcending all barriers of geography and language. Muslims were probably not mentioned in his scheme of national regeneration, because of their continued indifference to the benefits of education as well as of their want of political consciousness.

Rajnarayan Basu's Prospectus added fuel to the fire of nationalism that was burning in the heart of Nabagopal. With the help and advice of Dwijendranath Tagore and Ganendranath Tagore, he inaugurated the first *Hindu* or *Swadeshi Mela* at Belgachia on 12 April 1867. For a few years at the beginning this National Gathering was also called the *Chaitra Mela*. Its aims were to unite the Hindus, to create a feeling of nationality among them and to make them

increasingly self-reliant in all matters concerning the social, political and economic progress of the country. Ganendranath Tagore as Secretary of the *Mela*, or Manomohan Basu as chief speaker at the *Mela* on more than one occasion, made these aims abundantly clear to the public.

As Assistant Secretary of the *Mela*, Nabagopal was the livewire of the whole movement. Arrangements were made at every annual gathering for the exhibition of agricultural and industrial products. New spinning wheels, one made by Girish Chandra Mukherjee and the other by Sitanath Ghosh of Jessore, were displayed at the Gathering of 1870. A growing spirit of competition was noticeable among those who offered their exhibits for display at the *Mela*.

At every gathering national songs, composed by Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya, Satyendranath Tagore, Dwijendranath Tagore, Manomohan Basu and Rabindranath Tagore, were sung. These patriotic songs, together with stirring speeches delivered by Ganendranath, Manomohan Basu, Rajnarayan Basu and Rajani Kanta Gupta, created an abiding feeling of love for the country in the hearts of those who thronged the *Mela* every year as if it were a place of pilgrimage.

Steps were also taken, mainly on the initiative of Nabagopal, to create in youths an enthusiasm for Indian games (e.g., wrestling) and exercises, which became one of the most attractive features of the *Mela*. The simultaneous development of brain and brawn was the ideal placed before Indian youths.

Riding on the crest of this popular enthusiasm for Indian arts, science, music, games and exercises, Nabagopal, with the aid of his coadjutors, established the National School on 1 April 1872 in the premises of the Calcutta Training Academy at 13, Cornwallis Street (the address given by Bepin Chandra Pal of Nabagopal's gymnastic school is 1, Sankar Ghosh Lane). This institution imparted to students instructions on morality, Indian music, chemistry, geometry, drawing, carpentry, bricklaying, smithery, physical training, etc. Whatever might have been the curriculum of the School, in practice greater emphasis was laid on physical education. Apart from gymnastic exercises on horizontal and parallel bars and Roman rings, the young gymnasts were taught wrestling and the skilful use of *lathi*, dagger and sword. Among those who joined the School for physical training were Bepin Chandra Pal, Jitendranath Banerjee and Dr. Sundarimohan Das.

Sir George Campbell, who probably did not view with favour

the aims and activities of the School, excluded its boys from participating in the gymnastic tournament held under his orders on 7 January 1875 for Government schools only. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, while criticizing Campbell's policy, paid a glowing tribute to Nabagopal, who applied all his resources to improve the standard of physical training at the National School.

From the bubbling enthusiasm for all round national regeneration originated the National Society, which met once every month to hear thought-provoking papers or discussions on national problems concerning education, literature, science, religion, society, administration, agriculture, industry and commerce. As usual, Nabagopal was the mainspring of this Society. It was here that Sitanath Ghosh first demonstrated, in 1870, the use of his new textile machinery which was capable of doing the work of four men. It was at a meeting of this Society, on 15 September 1872, that Rajnarayan Basu read his stirring paper on the 'Superiority of the Hindu Religion', which, ending as it did with the patriotic song of Satyendranath Tagore, *Mile sabe Bharat santan, Aktan manapran, Gao Bharater yasogan* (Children of Bharat, sing in unison the song of Bharat's glory), added substance to the feeling of nationality fostered among the Hindus by the organizers of the *Mela*. Apart from Dwijendranath Tagore and Ganendranath Tagore, the most notable among those who came forward to fortify the efforts of Nabagopal Mitra were Raja Kamal-krishna Bahadur, Debendranath Tagore, Ramanath Tagore, Kristo Das Pal, Jyotirindranath Tagore, Sivanath Sastri and Kaliprasanna Ghosh.

Nabagopal Mitra himself delivered a speech on 1 June 1874, wherein he pointed out that if Bengalees were given proper training and allowed to join the army, they could prove their mettle on the battlefield. Equally interesting and inspiring was the speech of Baruipur, Dinajpur and Faridpur, similar gatherings, emphasizing women as well as of cultivating the vernacular language.

The patriotic ardour of the people for the National Gathering proved contagious. It spread in the districts where, particularly at Baruipur, Dinajpur and Faridpur, similar gatherings, emphasizing Hindu unity and self-reliance in industrial matters, were organized from 1871.

MORE CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICAL AWAKENING

It was his idea that India's progress towards a national State should begin with the steady development of self-government in the

country through the municipalities. To give this development proper impetus, he urged that the system of election should be introduced in the Calcutta Municipality. In his opinion, the nominated Justices did not represent anybody but themselves. In 1872, he wrote that the franchise in Calcutta should be unreserved. His suggestion was that the Government could nominate some members on its behalf, while the rest should be elected by the ratepayers.

Nabagopal was also a powerful critic of the British Government. He pointed out that the policy of excluding talented Indians from Government service was unsound on political grounds. The Government alone was to blame if such men spread disaffection against it. It was also an equally unsound policy to deny Indians high posts in Government service.

Nabagopal participated in the agitation launched by the Indian Association against the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton. He attended the public meeting held at the Town Hall to protest against the Act, and was selected a member of the Committee appointed under the presidency of the Rev. K. M. Banerjea to draw up a petition to Parliament. T. Palit, Chandra Madhav Ghosh, Dwijendranath Tagore, Dr. Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya were the other notable members of the Committee, of which Ananda Mohan Basu was the Secretary.

His love for the freedom of the Press was clearly reflected in his paper entitled 'Journalism in Bengal' read before the Bengal Academy of Literature (Bangiya Sahitya Parishad) in December 1893. It was published serially in the Academy's Journal of 6 January 1894 (Vol. I, No. 6) and 9 February 1894 (Vol. I, No. 7).

With the establishment of the Indian League in 1875 and of the Indian Association in 1876, the interest of the people in the *Hindu Mela* gradually flagged. It was not held after 1881. It disappeared from Bengal but not without serving a very important end. It had sown very effectively the seeds of *swadeshi* in the country and the younger generation came to be benefited by it. Bengal was virtually given a new look by the tremendous popular enthusiasm created for the National Gathering by Nabagopal Mitra.

At the 20th meeting of the Bengal Academy of Literature on 7 January 1894, he read a paper on Japan and its resurgence and "pointed to the lesson which the rapid progress of that nation offered to the Bengalis". This was his last public activity. He passed away

some time before 9 February 1894, on which day the Chairman of the Academy lamented his premature death at its 20th meeting.

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RAMESH CHANDRA MITRA

Noted for his progressive views and spirit of independence, Ramesh Chandra Mitra, son of Ram Chandra Mitra, was born in 1840 at Rajarhat-Bishnupur (near Dum Dum) in the 24-Parganas. Gifted with a sharp intellect, he passed the B.A. and B.L. Examinations from Presidency College and joined the bar of the Sadar Diwani Adalat (known as the High Court of Calcutta from 1861). His unequalled reputation on the Appellate side led to his appointment as a Judge of the High Court in 1871, after the demise of the Hon'ble Anukul Chandra Mukherjee. Before his retirement from this position in 1890, he officiated for some time as the Chief Justice. A member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council and a Fellow of the Calcutta University, he took a keen interest in the public affairs of the country. Government honours bestowed upon him, such as a knighthood and the K.C.I.E., could not affect in any way his spirit of independence.

SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

His spirit of independence was clearly reflected in his dissentient judgment delivered on the Contempt of Court case involving Surendranath Banerjea in May 1883. While the four European judges were at one in sentencing Surendranath to imprisonment, Ramesh Chandra contended, on the precedent of the Taylor case dealt with by Sir Barnes Peacock, that the accused should be fined only. Ramesh

Chandra's judgment made him very popular with the agitated public, who looked upon Surendranath as a demi-god. Ramesh Chandra rose higher in the public estimation when it became known that the Chief Justice, despite all his efforts, failed to persuade him to agree with the majority.

That apart, as a member of the Public Service Commission of 1887, he strongly upheld the Indian viewpoint about holding simultaneous examinations both in England and India for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service.

PROMOTER OF NATIONAL INTERESTS

Ramesh Chandra Mitra took a keen interest in the progress of the Ripon College. He helped its Law Department to ward off the threat of abolition in 1890. Subsequently, the progress of the College, as owned by Surendranath himself, owed much to Ramesh Chandra's unstinted help and cooperation.

The restoration of the jury system in Bengal in March 1893 would not have been possible without his strong recommendation as a member of the Jury Commission, set up by Government under the pressure of public opinion against Elliott's Jury Notification of 20 October 1892. The passing of Government measures in total disregard of the feelings of the public revealed to him the autocratic nature of British rule.

He voluntarily joined the Indian National Congress and was appointed the Chairman of its Reception Committee at its 12th session held in Calcutta in 1896. In his notable speech, he pointed out that the educated community represented "the brain and the conscience of the country and were the legitimate spokesmen of the illiterate masses". They were the natural custodians of their interests. To hold otherwise, said he, was to presuppose that "foreign administrators, in Government Service knew more about the wants of the masses than their educated countrymen". His speech emphasized the point that the Government should learn to pay serious heed to Indian viewpoints about their grievances and reforms expressed by the learned and informed members of the Congress.

His endeavour at social reform, having a bearing on national interests, lay in asking his countrymen to curtail their marriage expenses. His brother, Umesh Chandra Mitra, wholeheartedly co-operated with him in this matter.

He was, however, opposed to the Age of Consent or Scoble Bill

of 1891, and was considerably responsible for the growth of the anti-British feeling among the public over this measure.

Paying him a great tribute, Surendranath Banerjea writes: "Strong, honest, with an uncommon fund of that rarest of commodities, common sense, I always felt that he was one of the finest types of our race. He was not only a great judge, but a great man". This great man, the pride of his countrymen, passed away on 13 July 1899.

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DURGA MOHAN DAS

Born in 1841 at Telirbag in Bikrampur, Dacca, Durga Mohan Das was essentially a social reformer in the nineteenth century. His father, Kasisvar Das, was a pleader at Barisal.

Brought up by his uncle at Kalighat, Durga Mohan passed the B.A. and B.L. Examinations from the Presidency College and built up a very lucrative practice at the Calcutta High Court. He was also one of the financiers of the journal, *Brahmo Public Opinion*, subsequently called the '*Bengal Public Opinion*' before its merger in the '*Bengalee*' owned by Surendranath Banerjea. In managing the journal his brother, Bhuvan Mohan Das, helped him greatly.

SOCIAL REFORMER

An intimate friend of Sivanath Sastri and Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, he joined the *Brahmo Samaj* while a student. In 1878 he joined hands with his progressive friends, after seceding from Keshab Chandra Sen's group, in founding the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*.

Long before the question of Suniti Devi's marriage rose to split the *Brahmo Samaj*, he opposed Keshab Chandra Sen on the point of female freedom. With Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and others, he wanted women to come out of their seclusion in the prayer hall to listen to the preachings of the *Acharya* (Minister) sitting side by side with their husbands. Keshab Chandra had ultimately to yield in this matter to Durga Mohan and his supporters.

Durga Mohan was an active supporter of female education. He helped Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya to establish the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya* on 13 September 1873. When this school failed, he again came forward to assist Dwarakanath in founding the *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya* on 1 June 1876. Educated women, he felt, were the best guarantee of social progress and regeneration in the country.

He was associated with the Indian League established by Shishir Kumar Ghosh on 25 September 1875. But essentially a martyr to the cause of female emancipation, he died in 1897.

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GANENDRANATH TAGORE

A brilliant young man who departed from the world rather prematurely, Ganendranath Tagore, the eldest son of Girindranath Tagore, was born in 1841. He was educated at the Hindu School, from where he passed the Entrance Examination in 1857 with his cousin, Satyendranath Tagore, the first Indian Civilian. Though he did not prosecute his studies any further in college, he steadily burgeoned into a powerful writer in Bengali. Attracted to theatricals, he became the livewire of the Jorasanko Theatre from 1867.

A PATRIOT

The inauguration of the *Hindu Mela* at Belgachia on 12 April 1867 owes much to his selfless and untiring labour. As Secretary of the *Mela*, a position held by him until his death, he threw himself with patriotic zeal into the task of making arrangements for holding the National Gathering, where indigenous products were exhibited, national games and physical exercises held, national songs sung and patriotic poems recited. It is doubtful whether Nabagopal Mitra, known as 'National' Mitra, the initiator and Assistant Secretary of the *Mela*, could have made any headway in bringing to fruition his plans, had he not received the wholehearted cooperation of the young Tagores, particularly Ganendranath.

Speaking at the second session of the *Mela* on 11 April 1868, Ganendranath declared that the first aim of the National Gathering was to promote the welfare of India through the concerted efforts of

the Hindus. The gathering offered them a platform to unite. Secondly, the *Mela* was designed to teach the people self-reliance, which was a great virtue of the English. He made it clear that Indians must learn to depend upon their own efforts if they desired to promote the welfare of their country.

At this second session his stirring song, *Lajjay Bharat Yas Gaibo Ki Kare* (how can I sing in shame the glory of Bharat), was sung. In this song he regretted the indifference of his countrymen to the interests of their motherland, because of which foreigners were able to plunder with impunity her wealth.

Ganendranath was national-minded in everything—dress, education, religion and love for the country. To him also goes much of the credit for making the proceedings of the National Society a success.

His untimely death, at the age of 28, on 16 May 1869 deprived his countrymen of a young genius, whose unbounded energy and enthusiasm for the welfare of the motherland exercised the most salutary influence on the younger generation.

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SATYENDRANATH TAGORE

The first Indian Civilian, Satyendranath Tagore, the second son of Debendranath Tagore, was born at Jorasanko on 1 June 1842. A brilliant student, he passed the Entrance Examination from the Hindu School in 1857. During the period of his study at the Presidency College he seemed to have given more attention to the cause of the *Adi Brahmo Samaj* than to anything else. He was appointed editor of the *Tattwabodhini Patrika* in December 1859. In 1861, he visited Krishnagar to spread Brahmoism. But his energies were suddenly directed into a different channel when his father sent him to England in March 1862 for the Civil Service Examination. He passed the

Examination in June 1863 and became a Bombay Civilian the following year. After 33 years' service in the Judicial Branch, he retired in 1897.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Satyendranath was politically conscious, while a student of the Presidency College. This consciousness was manifested in his letter of 31 May 1861 from Krishnagar where he had gone with the explicit intent of reducing the influence of the Christian missionaries by promoting Brahmoism. The letter, addressed to his cousin, shows his awareness of the sympathy created in many quarters for the oppressed but defiant indigo ryots, who had resolved, "come what may! not to sow indigo any more". He found the despatch of Sir Charles Wood very encouraging, because it deprived the planters of their last resource. He felt happy at the determination of some ryots "to inflict loss and injury on the planters" and eagerly hoped that they would ultimately be saved from the cruel grasp of the latter.

His subsequent entry into the much coveted membership of the Civil Service of India did not affect his patriotic spirit in any way. His great national song—*Mile Sabe Bharat Santan, aktan manapran, gao Bharater yasogan* (Children of Bharat, sing in unison the song of Bharat's glory)—sung at the second session of the *Hindu Mela* commencing on 11 April at Belgachia proved to be an eloquent testimony to his patriotism. In this song, which Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya wanted to be national anthem of India, Satyendranath, apart from asking his countrymen to sing the glory and fame of their country without fear, emphasized that real strength lay in national unity. Enchanting and inspiring, the song was frequently sung with zest by people, including Rajnarayan Basu, at many sessions of the National Gathering. It was a definite contribution to the common endeavour to promote a feeling of nationality among the people in the country.

After his retirement from the Indian Civil Service, Satyendranath took a more active interest in politics. He was elected President of the Bengal Provincial Conference at its 10th session held at Natore from 10 to 12 June 1897. In his presidential speech he pointed out that for achieving necessary reforms his countrymen must show steadfast, persistent and self-sacrificing heroism. They had not only to represent their grievances to the Government, but also to educate the masses, whose intelligent appreciation of public affairs alone could

help bring to bear the whole weight of the people upon the administration of the country.

A PROGRESSIVE

Satyendranath was a champion of the cause of female emancipation. Influenced by John Stuart Mill's 'Subjection of Women', he wrote a pamphlet entitled *Stri Swadhinata* (Female Freedom). The sight of the freedom of women in England as well as in Bombay induced him to take up the cudgels for women's freedom at the residence of the Tagores at Jorasanko. The traditional life of exclusion for women at home was repugnant to his mind. He gave complete freedom of movement to his wife, setting aside all family interdictions. The example set influenced his brothers also, particularly Jyotirindranath. He was also a staunch advocate of the necessity of imparting liberal education to women.

Noted for his contributions to the vernacular literature, he was elected President of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* for two years.

He passed away on 9 January 1923.

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GURUPRASAD SEN

Born in 1842 at Domsar in Bikrampur, Dacca, Guruprasad Sen, who lost his father, Kashi Chandra Sen, very early in life, was brought up by his maternal uncle. He graduated from Presidency College. After teaching for some time at Presidency College, he joined the Subordinate Executive Service as Deputy Magistrate. Very independent-minded, he soon resigned on account of his differences with the European Magistrate of Patna and joined the bar at Bankipore. Henceforth, Bihar became the centre of his patriotic activities. He was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council for one year.

PROTESTER AGAINST OPPRESSION

In Bihar he protested against the oppression practised by the European indigo planters on the poor and helpless ryots. The 'Behar

Herald', launched by him, ventilated the grievances of the people against the Government. At the same time he helped the establishment of the Behar Landholders' Association to enable the landed gentry to safeguard their interests.

He also protested against the continuance of social oppression in the name of Hinduism. A hater of orthodoxy and narrowness, he worked for social regeneration by spreading education. To him, education offered the only means to free society from the inhibiting trammels of Hinduism.

A Brahmo, he died at Bankipore in 1900.

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NARENDRANATH SEN

An eminent journalist and a great public figure of his time, Narendranath Sen, the fourth son of Harimohan Sen and grandson of Ram Kamal Sen, was born in Calcutta on 23 February 1843. Educated at the Hindu College and privately coached for some time by Capt. Palmer, he began his excursions into the field of journalism very early in life. Though an attorney by profession, it was to journalism, however, that he was wholeheartedly devoted. He succeeded Manomohan Ghosh as editor of the 'Indian Mirror' in 1863. Subsequently, he became its sole proprietor. Unfortunately, however, his popularity with the public was considerably undermined by his association as editor with the *Sulabh Samachar*, a vernacular weekly, subsidized by the Government to check the mounting anti-British feeling in Bengal during the anti-Partition agitation.

Narendranath was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was also a Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipality from 1897 to 1899.

A CHAMPION OF INDIAN INTERESTS

In 1878, Narendranath joined the British Indian Association's deputation led by Maharaja Narendra Krishna Deb to present a memorial to Lord Lytton at Government House, requesting him not to submit to the demand of the Manchester merchants for the abolition of import duties on their cotton goods exported to India.

The memorial, with its polite reference to the Afghan War and the Licence Tax, provoked Lord Lytton into rebuking the deputation in such a way as to send a wave of indignation all over the country. What added to the popular indignation was the levy of Rs. 2 as tax on an annual income less than Rs. 300 under the Licence Tax Act of 1878. The deputation's fear that Government might try to make up the loss in revenue (about Rs. 20 lakhs annually), caused by the abolition of import duties, by imposing fresh taxes on the impoverished people was coming true to their alarm. The leaders of society also felt very much exercised over the Government's policy of free trade, which was wholly prejudicial to the interests of the nascent textile industry of India.

All this apart, to promote the industrial progress of Bengal, Narendranath felt that it was necessary to make arrangements for imparting industrial training to young men. To realize this purpose, an institution was set up in Calcutta, with Narendranath as its President.

A FEARLESS EDITOR

Narendranath, editor and proprietor of the 'Indian Mirror', was a fearless man of great independence of spirit. One day in 1887, he along with Surendranath Banerjea, editor of the 'Bengalee', Ananda Mohan Basu, Dr. Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee, editor of the 'Reis and Rayyet', Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and several others waited upon Lord Dufferin in Government House, on behalf of the Indian Association. Lord Dufferin, before formally receiving the members of the deputation, first asked whether the editor of the 'Indian Mirror' was present among the party. On coming to know that he was there, Dufferin unceremoniously asked him how he came to know that the Viceroy had sent a "secret despatch" to the Secretary of State for India, recommending the gagging of the Indian Press. Narendranath with his characteristic boldness refused to answer the question and respectfully pointed out to the Viceroy that to put such a question to an editor on such a public occasion was simply against all etiquette. When the conversation took an unpleasant turn, Lord Dufferin understood his error and apologized to the offended editor.

Narendranath firmly believed in the freedom of the Press. While presiding over a monster public meeting in 1906 at the house of Pashupatinath Basu in Baghbazar, he observed: "The Press and the platform are the safety-valves of popular discontent. Whenever

they have been sought to be suppressed, anarchy has intervened". The Government was too obtuse to appreciate this remark during the days of the anti-Partition agitation.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

The cause of social regeneration was always very near his heart. He encouraged widow remarriage and condemned the performance of penance by those who had gone abroad across the high seas. He felt that there could be no social progress as long as Hindus did not discard their exclusive and parochial spirit. Child or early marriage in society was also condemned by him.

POLITICAL PROGRESS

Narendranath was an advocate of the cause of local self-government. With Raja Binay Krishna Deb and several others, he also condemned the Mackenzie Bill, which brought the Calcutta Municipality under official control. In protest against this Bill he, along with others, resigned his Municipal Commissionership in 1899.

Narendranath was associated with both the British Indian Association and the Indian Association. He was one of the few Bengalees to attend the first session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay in December 1885. He also attended the Madras session of the Congress in 1887, where the question of self-government was raised for the first time and the Arms Act was trenchantly criticised.

Narendranath, despite his identification with the anti-Partition agitation in Bengal from 1905, came to be maligned much, because of lending the weight of his name and influence to the *Sulabh Samachar*, which was used by the Government to counteract the influence of the *swadeshi* agitation. To Surendranath Banerjea, this was the only flaw in Narendranath's public career.

If it was a flaw, it was so, not because of his lack of sympathy for the national cause, but because of his temperamental inability to reconcile himself to the growing anarchy in Bengal. It must not be forgotten that as a fearless champion of Indian interests he had few equals. It was he who boldly presided over the Town Hall meeting of 5 August 1905, where the resolution on the boycott of British goods was adopted. It was he who presided over the Greer Park meeting of 7 August 1906, where the national flag was hoisted for the first time. It was also he who presided over the meeting of 1907, at which medals were awarded by him to those brave patriots

who had been punished by Government for throwing away British salt and obstructing the sale of British goods. Narendranath was also a patriot with this difference that he was always inclined to follow the dictates of his own conscience.

A man of sterling character, he passed away on 1 July 1911.

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BAIKUNTHANATH SEN

Baikunthanath Sen, son of Harimohan Sen-Barat, was born on 14 June 1843 at Alampur in Burdwan. A brilliant student of the Presidency College, he graduated in 1863 and took his B.L. Degree in 1864. He first joined the bar of the Calcutta High Court and then, in 1866, moved to the bar of the Berhampore Court. Within a short time he became the leading pleader there. An Honorary Magistrate of Berhampore from 1873 to 1899, Chairman of the Berhampore Municipality from 1885 to 1894, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1899, one of the advisers of the Kasimbazar Maharaja for ten years, Baikunthanath never failed to inspire confidence in those who came into contact with him.

A DEDICATED POLITICAL WORKER

Baikunthanath was a devoted member of the Congress, and as President of the Murshidabad Association and Secretary of the Murshidabad District Congress Committee, he worked hard to awaken the people to the needs of the country.

At the Poona Congress of 1895, presided over by Surendranath Banerjea, Baikunthanath introduced a resolution which urged upon the Welby Commission (then sitting in London) to make public the principles which determined the Government's policy of allocating the Indian revenue for expenditure under different heads.

Because of his well-known spirit of dedication, he was appointed a member of the Education Committee set up by the Congress at its Lahore session in 1900 on the basis of the resolution introduced by Lala Lajpat Rai.

Associated with the Congress till the last day of his life, he was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Calcutta Congress in 1917.

Under his inspiring guidance the Bengal Provincial Conference, virtually an offshoot of the Congress, altered the venue of its annual sessions from 1895. Inaugurated in 1888, it always held its meetings in Calcutta till 1895, in which year it met at Berhampore on the suggestion of Baikunthanath. The Berhampore session of the Bengal Provincial Conference, an organization which considerably helped the cause of political awakening in Bengal, was the first to be held outside Calcutta. The mofussil sessions of the Conference made the local people increasingly conscious of the political and economic problems of Bengal in particular as well as of India in general.

Held in high esteem everywhere, he died in April 1921.

Bibliography: S. N. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*; Bagal, *Muktir Sandhane Bharat* (1367 B.S.).

NAGENDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Son of Dwarakanath Chattopadhyaya, Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya was born in October 1843 at Bansberia in Hooghly. He passed the Entrance Examination in 1862 from the Krishnagar Collegiate School. While a student, he came under the influence of Brahmoism and was soon formally initiated into it. In 1878 he was appointed a Minister of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*. He worked indefatigably for the propagation of Brahmoism. He is chiefly remembered as the biographer of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

His liberal social ideas did not always find favour with Keshab Chandra Sen. He was an advocate of equality between man and woman, as well as of giving women easy access to the highest education available for men in the country. He, along with Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and Durga Mohan Das, stood foursquare against

the segregation of ladies in the prayer hall of the *Brahmo Samaj*. Keshab Chandra Sen had ultimately to yield on this point to the opposition.

Nagendranath was also a staunch advocate of widow remarriage. While living at Krishnagar, he took the initiative in getting a widow remarried, without caring for social obloquy. It was his firm conviction that without women's emancipation there could be no social progress.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

To his spirit of freedom the steady political awakening of his countrymen was welcome. He did his best to help spread this political consciousness, together with the spirit of self-reliance, among the people. At the *Hindu Mela* of 1872 he delivered an inspiring speech on *Swadesh Priiti* (Love of the Country).

As a member of the Indian Association, he took a keen interest in its political activities since 1876. In 1877, when the Indian Association launched an agitation on the Civil Service question, he accompanied Surendranath Banerjea on a tour of Upper India to obtain funds and wider support for the Association's plan of action.

In 1883, after the release of Surendranath Banerjea from gaol, Nagendranath actively helped those engaged in raising a national fund needed by the Indian Association for its political work.

An advocate of freedom from galling restraints, both social and political, Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya passed away in June 1913.

Bibliography: Sashibhusan Vidyalankara, *Jibani Kosh (Bharatiya Aitibhasik)*, Vol. IV, 1346 B.S.); S. N. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (1925); B. Ghosh, *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra* (Vol. II, 1962); B. C. Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, 1857-84 (1932).

GOOROODAS BANDYOPADHYAYA

One of the promoters of national resurgence in the country, Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya was born on 26 January 1844 of humble parents, whose ancestors hailed from Boral in the Diamond Harbour Subdivision of the 24-Parganas. His father, Ram Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, who died in 1847 in his own simple dwelling house at Narkeldanga, was a clerk in the office of Carr, Tagore & Co. Three factors helped him to overcome the financial embarrassment caused by his father's early death: his mother's moral influence and right

guidance, his maternal uncle's unfailing care and, above all, his own brilliance as a scholar.

He had his schooling at the General Assembly's Institution, the Oriental Seminary and the Colootola Branch School, from where he passed the Entrance Examination in 1859. A rare combination of memory, intelligence and industry, he came out first, as a student of the Presidency College, in all other examinations of the Calcutta University: F.A. in 1862, B.A. in 1864, M.A. in 1865 and B.L. in 1866. He passed the Law Honours Examination in 1876, while practising as Vakil in the Calcutta High Court.

A temporary Professor of Mathematics first at the Presidency College and then at the General Assembly's Institution, he joined the Berhampore College in 1866 as Professor of Mathematics and Law, with the privilege of practising in law courts. At Berhampore, he also acted for some time as the Legal Adviser of the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad.

Yielding to his mother's importunities, he returned to Calcutta and joined the High Court as Vakil in 1872. His growing reputation led to his elevation to the Bench of the High Court in 1888. After working as a Judge for sixteen years, he voluntarily retired on 31 January 1904, thereby making way for a younger man to succeed him.

In 1879, he was appointed an Honorary Magistrate. He was also a Municipal Commissioner of Calcutta for some time. In 1887, he was sent to the Bengal Legislative Council as one of the representatives of the Calcutta Corporation.

But his association with the Calcutta University since 1879, when he was appointed a Fellow, proved very fruitful. He was its first Indian Vice-Chancellor for three years from 1890 to 1892. His competence as an educationist compelled Lord Curzon to appoint him a member of the Indian Universities Commission of 1902. In 1912, he was appointed Dean of the University's Faculty of Law. He was knighted by the Government in June 1904. In 1908, the Calcutta University conferred on him the honorary Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

EMBODIMENT OF INDIAN CULTURE

Though Gooroodas imbibed the best fruits of Western learning and shone with grace in public life, he always modelled his conduct on Indian standards of simplicity and spiritual fervour. Not merely by preaching but also by sincerely practising the moral and spiritual values of Indian culture he contributed towards the construction of

a solid base for patriotism and national resurgence in the country. The spiritual enslavement of his English-educated countrymen, who strengthened the hold of British imperialism on India by looking upon England as their spiritual home, was to Gooroodas a very big obstacle in the way of the growth of a sense of nationalism in the country. He thus demonstrated by his way of life that there was no need on the part of any Indian to imbibe Western manners and customs at the cost of his own. He disdained the inordinate love of the younger generation among his countrymen for dress and show. Thus, in his paper entitled 'Abused India Vindicated', read before the Literary Club at Berhampore in 1870, he observed: "If the tailor be the high priest of the regenerative ceremony of India, far be such regeneration from me and my countrymen".

PIONEER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

In this same paper, 'Abused India Vindicated', one can trace his thought which ultimately became a source of inspiration to the national education movement in Bengal.

He felt that the system of education had to be reoriented in order to make its young beneficiaries useful to the country. And this end could be achieved if education was imparted in the vernaculars. Thus, in his Convocation Address of 1891, he stressed the need of encouraging the study of Indian vernaculars—Bengali, Urdu and Hindi. He expressed his belief that Indians could not have "any thorough and extensive culture as a nation", unless knowledge was disseminated through their vernaculars. He made it clear that "the depths of ignorance all round would never be illumined until the light of knowledge reached the masses through the media of their own vernaculars". This did not mean that he deprecated the study of the English language and its literature. He was broad-minded enough to advise his countrymen, in his Convocation Address of 1890, to enrich their vernacular literature with all that was valuable in Western learning and also to contribute at the same time to the literature of the West the precious treasures that lay hidden in their own classics. This literary traffic, not one way by any means, was sure to yield adequate returns.

Needless to say, one of the most important points in his policy about education was the necessity of promoting the study of the vernaculars, the most notable of which was Bengali. While associated with the Calcutta University, he tried hard to introduce Bengali as

the medium of instruction at all levels of study. He, Asutosh Mukherjee and two others in a Senate of seventy supported a motion in 1905 for making vernacular composition compulsory at the Entrance Examination. As a member of the Committee of five of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, he drafted the letter to the University, suggesting that instructions to Bengali students in all subjects (except English), from the lowest to the highest stage of their University career, be given through the medium of the Bengali language.

The need to arrange for vocational education in the prescribed course of study for the Entrance Examination also received his close attention. This course, he pointed out in his Convocation Address of 1892, should be enlarged to include alternative subjects, each being suited for a particular career. If such a scheme were judiciously devised, it would qualify the under-graduates not only for literary and scientific careers, but also for industrial and commercial pursuits. This point was further developed by him in his speech delivered at the inaugural meeting of the National Council of Education, held at the Town Hall on 15 August 1906 under the presidency of Rashbehary Ghose. He emphatically stated in this speech that young men in the country must be encouraged to turn their attention to agriculture, manufacture and commerce. As a matter of fact, he drew up a scheme for the introduction of commercial, agricultural and technological education in the University. He felt that "labour must be helped with learning".

His ideas about what later came to be called 'national education' matured further as a result of his intimate association with the 'Dawn Society' established by Satish Chandra Mukherjee in 1902. He was its President for some time, and later this association encouraged him to throw himself heart and soul into the business of the National Council of Education established in 1906. He was the livewire of this movement from November 1905 when the first Education Conference of patriots was held. As a logical sequence to the ideas he had preached earlier, he said, at the inaugural meeting of the National Council of Education on 15 August 1906, that the education, both technical and literary, to be imparted by the Council must be developed not in opposition to the existing system. No antagonism should be allowed to govern the policy of the Council. The mother tongue must be made the medium of instruction, and text-books in Arts and Science had to be prepared in the vernaculars. He called upon every genuine supporter of the *Swadeshi* movement to extend

his help to the Council's new educational policy designed to promote the interests of the country.

Gooroodas's patriotic opposition to the Government's control over the educational system of the country made him wholeheartedly support the aims of the National Council of Education. This opposition of his was clearly reflected in his Minute of Dissent submitted to the Indian Universities Commission of 1902. He did not like Curzon's policy of establishing official control over the Indian Universities under the new Constitution of 1904.

PROMOTER OF FEMALE EDUCATION

In the opinion of Gooroodas, women were the primary educators of society. Thus, he said in his Convocation Address of 1891: "No community can be said to be an educated community unless its female members are educated. . . . in the true sense of the term". Upon the spread of female education the regeneration of society was considerably dependent.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

Education of the right kind, education that energized the mind and the body, could be imparted if only the teachers equipped themselves well with sound knowledge and inspiring characters. Gooroodas always laid great stress on the personal influence of good teachers. He once said: "Arnold has done for Rugby more than a library full of moral text-books could do". Teachers, by exercising the right kind of influence, could immensely help the harmonious and effective development of all the faculties of their pupils, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. They must also make it a point not to encourage cramming at the cost of independent thinking among their pupils.

His unflagging interest in the cause of national regeneration through the spread of proper education led to his intimate association with many institutions other than the University of Calcutta: the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, the Hindu and Hare Schools, the Calcutta University Institute, the Narikeldanga High School, etc.

A PATRIOT

A patriot of the highest type, Gooroodas was actively connected with many political movements before his elevation to the Bench in 1888. He was one of the founder-members of the Indian Association

established in 1876. He also took an active part in the agitation against Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act. He was a member of the special Committee, set up under the presidency of the Rev. K. M. Banerjea, to draw up a petition against the Press Act for submission to Parliament.

He also played an important role in the deliberations of the second National Conference held in December 1885. At the close of the Conference he was appointed a member of a 19-man Committee, which was entrusted with the task of drawing up a scheme of reforms beneficial to Indian interests.

The patriot in him could not be silent and inert the day the Government partitioned Bengal. It was 16 October 1905, and on that day a special meeting was held for laying the foundation stone of the Federation Hall with a view to commemorating the unity of the people. Ananda Mohan Basu presided over the meeting, which was addressed by Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya. His eloquent speech, in which he strongly condemned the iniquitous partition, inspired young and old alike to make a common stand against the policy of the Government. Surendranath Banerjea rightly points out that the appearance of Gooroodas on the platform as a speaker probably opened the eyes of the authorities to the deep feeling that lay behind the anti-Partition movement in Bengal.

A man of simple habits and honest convictions, Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya passed away on 2 December 1918.

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MANOMOHAN GHOSH

An eminent criminal lawyer, Manomohan Ghosh, son of Ramlochan Ghosh, was born on 13 March 1844 at Bairagadi in Vikrampur (Dacca). After receiving a sound education at the Krishnagar

Collegiate School and the Presidency College, he went to England in 1862 to compete for the Civil Service. But he failed in 1864 owing to the vagaries of the Civil Service Commissioners, who, just before the Examination, had reduced the full marks for Sanskrit from 500 to 375. He could not sit for the Examination in 1865 also, because of the reduction of the maximum age for intending candidates from 22 to 21. Thus, with the doors of the Civil Service slammed upon his face, he had no alternative but to go in for the study of Law at the Lincoln's Inn. He returned to Calcutta in 1866 as a barrister and built up within a short time a large and lucrative practice at the bar of the High Court.

PROMOTER OF A SENSE OF BELONGING

His failure at the Civil Service Examination owing to the unfair manipulations of the Civil Service Commissioners made him not only a bitter critic of the British Government but also a patriot who loved his country and her culture more dearly than anything else on earth.

His pamphlet, "The Open Competition for the Civil Service of India", which was published in 1866 by Messrs. Trubner & Co., London, was an open condemnation of the mean motives underlying the revision of the Civil Service Examination Rules. The objection of the Commissioners that Indians should not be permitted to enter the Service unless they were thoroughly Europeanized was most unreasonable. To him Europeanization was welcome if it helped the liberation of the Indian mind from the yoke of traditions and pernicious customs. On the other hand, Europeanization could not but be condemned if it imparted to them European vices, extinguished in them every spark of sympathy for their own country and made them contemptuous of their own culture and literature. He noted with regret the tendency of English education in India to wean away many of his countrymen from the fountains of their culture and to destroy their sense of belonging.

GROWING DEMAND FOR RIGHTS

When information about the causes of Manomohan's failure reached Calcutta, there was widespread resentment against the new Rules of the Civil Service Examination. At a public meeting held in Calcutta under the auspices of the British Indian Association on 19 July 1865, Peary Chand Mitra, Ramanath Tagore and Rajendralal Mitra severely criticized the unfair policy of the British Government.

The meeting unanimously resolved that the minimum and maximum ages for intending Civil Service candidates should be fixed at 21 and 25 respectively. Branches of the British Indian Association were opened at Aligarh and elsewhere in India to carry on the agitation against the inhibiting Rules of the Civil Service. The London Indian Society, set up in 1865, was requested to promote the same purpose in England. The Parliamentary Statute of 1870, recommending the recruitment of Indians in India to the Civil Service, was the outcome of this agitation. Thrown as a sop to Indians, it, however, remained inoperative till 1879. It pleased none, for it did not meet the basic Indian demands and was an insult to the intelligence of educated Indians. The situation was further aggravated by the new Rules of the Civil Service Examination in 1876, and this was fully exploited by the Indian Association to spread political consciousness and a feeling of unity among Indians.

HIS PATRIOTIC ACTIVITIES

The unfailing friend of the poor and the exploited, Manomohan, while a mere student at Krishnagar, took an active interest in the hardships suffered by the indigo ryots. In 1860, he wrote long letters to the 'Hindoo Patriot', describing the sufferings of the ryots. He regularly attended the sittings of the Indigo Commission when it examined witnesses at Krishnagar for a fortnight in June 1860.

Later, as barrister, he employed his forensic talents to expose and to check the vagaries of the mofussil police and magistracy. In 1882 he saved an innocent cultivator from the gallows to which he was sentenced by Dickens, the Sessions Judge of Nadia. In the Lal Chand Chowdhuri Case he had Kirkwood, the power-mad Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong, humiliated and transferred. In the Lokenathpur Case, the Nadia Students' Case and in several others he held up the protectors of law and order in the mofussil to withering scorn. Reports of these cases appearing in the vernacular papers not unoften caused the Government deep concern and uneasiness about the conduct of the mofussil police and magistracy.

To Manomohan, the public Press was the bulwark of popular freedom. He came to realize this as editor of the 'Indian Mirror' before his departure for England in March 1862. As barrister, he considerably depended upon the Press to check the autocracy and prevarication of the mofussil magistracy. From the time of the Lal Chand Chowdhuri Case he always took with him a newspaper reporter to the mofussil

court so that the proceedings of the case might be correctly reported. He thus became, as Surendranath Banerjea points out, "a terror to the wrong-headed mofussil magistrates". It stands to the credit of Manomohan to have saved the life and liberty of many an innocent man by his "merciful and unpaid advocacy".

His experience as a criminal lawyer impressed him with the need for the separation of judicial and executive functions in the administration of criminal justice. This alone, he maintained in his book "Desirability of Separating Judicial from Executive and Police Functions of Magistrates in India" (1884), could ensure the impartial administration of criminal justice in the mofussil.

In 1885, he visited England, together with N. G. Chandavarkar of Bombay and S. R. Mudalier of Madras, and addressed several public meetings to create public opinion there in favour of the crying Indian questions. By his well-reasoned speeches he was able to focus public attention on the necessity of separating the Judiciary from the Executive in India as well as of admitting Indians to positions of trust and responsibility in the administration of the country. On the problem of the separation of judicial and executive functions he got up a representation, which was submitted to the Secretary of State for India, signed by Lord Hobhouse, Sir Richard Garth and Mr. Herbert Reynolds. The agitation he initiated in this regard never flagged because of the increasing interest taken in it by many members of the Indian National Congress, including Surendranath Banerjea. It helped to rouse the political consciousness of the intelligentsia in India.

A member of the Indian League, a supporter of the Indian Association and later an active worker in the cause of the Congress, Manomohan was a tower of strength to all public movements launched to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of the people. He was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress at its Calcutta session in 1890.

He was at one with those who condemned the abolition of the jury system by the Jury Notification of 20 October 1892. It was he who showed up the Government of India's Despatch to the Secretary of State for India regarding the Jury Notification as a complete misrepresentation of the effects of the operation of the jury system in Bengal. Ultimately, public pressure in Bengal, reinforced by the recommendations of the Jury Commission, led to the withdrawal of the Jury Notification in March 1893.

ADVOCATE OF SOCIAL REGENERATION

Like many of his progressive compatriots, Manomohan always believed that the regeneration of society was not possible without the spread of education among women. He helped Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya in establishing the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya* in Calcutta on 18 September 1873. He also promoted the cause of female education by the active interest he took in it as Secretary of the Bethune School Committee.

A staunch advocate of the abolition of early marriage in society, he boldly supported, together with Durga Charan Laha, the Age of Consent Bill in 1891, for which he was tauntingly described as a non-Hindu by the *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika* of 11 February 1891. Undaunted by criticism emanating from the orthodox Hindu quarter, he carried on his advocacy against early marriage with his usual vigour till the last day of his life.

A genuine friend of the poor, a terror to the ill-inspired European magistracy and an unstinting patron of Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the great poet of Bengal, Manomohan Ghosh passed away at Krishnagar in October 1896 while engaged in penning a strong note on the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions in India.

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DWARAKANATH GANGOPADHYAYA

"An ardent lover of what he believed to be the truth, when he took up a cause he threw his whole soul into it". This was the tribute paid by Surendranath Banerjea to Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, a demure but very sincere worker, whose memory, he added, deserved "to be rescued from oblivion". Son of Krishnapran Gangopadhyaya,

a man of humble means, Dwarakanath was born at Magurkhanda in Bikrampur (Dacca) on 20 April 1844. From his childhood he was influenced by his mother, who instilled into him a deep love for truth and justice. While a student of the Kalipara School, he came to be influenced also by the rational writings of Akshay Kumar Datta on such social problems as polygamy, child marriage, intercaste marriage and widow remarriage. Together with some of his socially-conscious school friends, he attended public meetings where attempts were made to propagate the ideas of Akshay Kumar Datta. Participation in the local movement for the spread of these ideas among the orthodox people led him to neglect his studies at school. He thus failed to pass the Entrance Examination.

SOCIAL REFORMER

This failure, combined with increasing disagreement with his relatives and the local people over the broad issue of social reform, made him leave home in search of an independent livelihood. Pledged to monogamy and to the cause of ameliorating women's position in society, he steadily grew in stature as a social reformer wherever he went to work as a school teacher.

In May 1869, he launched at Lonsing, a village in Faridpur, a journal named *Abalabandhaba*, which helped him to rise from obscurity to the position of a recognized spokesman of women's rights in society. Dedicated to the cause of women's education and their emancipation, the journal attracted the attention of the Brahmos, including Sivanath Sastri and his progressive friends, in Calcutta. At their request, Dwarakanath came to Calcutta in 1870 and, with their cooperation, turned the journal into a powerful organ of women's cause.

Though he became a Brahmo, his views about the rights of women were more progressive than those of Keshab Chandra Sen. joining hands with Durga Mohan Das, Annadacharan Khastagir and Rajaninath Roy, he demanded that Brahmo ladies be allowed to come out of their screen of seclusion in the prayer hall and sit side by side with the menfolk. Keshab's resistance to their demand made them shun his prayer hall. They returned only when Keshab conceded to their demand.

The nature and standard of education to be given to Brahmo women in the *Bharat Asram* constituted another bone of contention between Keshab Chandra Sen on the one hand and Dwarakanath

and his friends on the other. The former's stubborn disinclination to appreciate the necessity of imparting higher education of the University standard to the female inmates of the *Asram* made Dwarakanath withdraw himself from it and found, with the help of Manomohan Ghosh and Durga Mohan Das, the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya* on 18 September 1873 at 22, Beniapukur Lane. The school was placed under the supervision of Miss Acroyd (later Mrs. Beveridge), but the responsibility of keeping it going was unilaterally shouldered by Dwarakanath. Its closure in March 1876 could not damp his enthusiasm for the cause he had espoused. On 1 June the same year, he opened, with the help of Ananda Mohan Basu and Durga Mohan Das, another school named *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya* at Old Ballygunge Road. The standard of education in the school was commendably high. The system followed was praised even by the Education Department of the Government. Considered "the most advanced school in Bengal", it was merged in the Bethune School on 1 August 1878. Among its alumni were such illustrious women as Swarnaprabha Basu (wife of Ananda Mohan Basu), Sarala Roy (wife of Dr. Prasanna Kumar Roy), Lady Abala Basu (wife of Sir Jagadish Chandra Basu), Girijakumari Sen (wife of Sasipada Sen), Kadambini Gangopadhyaya (wife of Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya) and Hemlata Devi (daughter of Sivanath Sastri).

Another girls' school, heavily indebted to Dwarakanath for its progress and prosperity since its establishment in May 1890, is the *Brahmo Balika Vidyalaya*. But for his financial aid from 1895 this school could not have had enduring foundations.

His campaign against polygamy and child marriage was carried on through his journal, the *Abalabandhaba*. He also edited for some time the *Samalochak*, which vehemently criticized the marriage of Keshab Chandra Sen's minor daughter to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar on 6 March 1878. In cooperation with the dissentients on this issue, he had the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* established in May 1878. To him, the pursuit of an ideal beneficial to women was more important than the unity of the Indian Brahmo Samaj.

Untiring in his endeavour to further the interests of women, because of which his friends nicknamed him *abalabandhaba* (the friend of the weaker sex), he established, in 1879, the *Bikrampur Sanmilani Sabha* in Calcutta with the same end in view. Under the auspices of this Sabha, of which Dwarakanath was the President, some girls' schools were established in Bikrampur.

His second wife (the first wife died at Lonsing), Kadambini-devi, stands as the best testimony to his sincere effort to promote the cause of female education. Educated at his schools, the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya* and the *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya*, she became the first woman graduate of the Calcutta University in 1882. After her marriage to Dwarakanath in 1883, she was encouraged to join the Calcutta Medical College, from where she emerged in 1886 as the first woman L.M.S. She was then sent to Edinburgh and Glasgow, from where she returned with the L.R.C.P. and L.R.C.S. diplomas. An independent medical career was deliberately chalked out for her by her husband for the sake of Bengalee women, whose shyness thwarted proper treatment of their diseases at the hands of male doctors.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG WOMEN

Dwarakanath was never tired of insisting that women also should be allowed to send their representatives for participation in the deliberations of the Indian National Congress. The best way of awakening in women an active political interest was to allow them to identify themselves with the Congress. The leaders ultimately yielded to his demand and permitted the first women's delegation, led by Kadambini Gangopadhyaya, to attend the 5th session of the Congress at Bombay in 1889. In the delegation, composed of six women, Swarnakumari Ghosal, the authoress-daughter of Debendranath Tagore, was also included. It is interesting to note that Kadambinidevi even addressed the 6th session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1890.

PERSONAL POLITICAL ENDEAVOUR

Surendranath Banerjea acknowledged with gratitude the assistance he received from Dwarakanath in organizing on popular lines the Indian Association established on 26 July 1876. He was a member of its Executive Committee from 1876 to 1878 and in 1881. From 1882 to 1898 he was its Assistant Secretary. He actively helped Surendranath Banerjea in collecting funds for sending Lal Mohan Ghosh to England in 1878 with the Civil Service Memorial, which demanded not merely raising the maximum age to 22, but also simultaneous examinations in England and India.

He also came to be intimately associated with the Congress after its establishment in 1885. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in

1896, he organized an industrial exhibition, which added a new dimension to the general policy of this great political body of India.

But what helped him to come into the limelight of the political field was the arduous tour he undertook in Assam in July 1886 to investigate the conditions of the tea-garden labourers. With tenacity, braving all hazards and caring little for official suspicion and hostility, he moved on from garden to garden, making an on-the-spot study of European oppression as well as of the labourers' appalling conditions of life. His reports were all serially published in the *Sanjibani*. What was revealed therein of ruthless European exploitation shocked the public conscience in Bengal. The educated middle-classes were eager to help the *coolies* who were increasingly getting involved in law suits while attempting to break away from their slavery.

In spite of the insistence of Dwarakanath and Bipin Chandra Pal, the Congress at its Madras session in 1887 refused to discuss the question of tea-garden labourers on the plea of its being a provincial affair. But the informed public mind in Bengal was very agitated over the question. It was thus taken up for discussion at the Bengal Provincial Conference, which met, in 1888, under the presidency of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar. A resolution was adopted, condemning not only the system of oppression obtaining in the tea-gardens of Assam, but also the use of the derogatory term *coolie*.

A PATRIOTIC NATIONALIST

A patriot, Dwarakanath also tried to stir up a spirit of nationalism among his countrymen through his national songs, one of which, beginning with the line *Sonar Bharat aj yavanadbikare* (golden Bharat is today under foreign subjection), was first published in his historical drama, *Bir-nari* (1875). It was later included in his anthology of national songs, *Jatiya Sangeet*, published in 1876. In this song he lamented 'golden India' being under complete foreign control. It pained him to see India, the quarry of intellectual gems and the home of a great culture, lying steeped in darkness. It was much better, preferred he, that India be a vast cremation ground than an enslaved country.

In another song, beginning with the stirring line *Na jagile sab Bharat-lalana, a Bharat ar jage na jage na* (Bharat will never awake if her womenfolk do not wake up), he exhorted the women of India

to awaken and inspire their children with heroic tales about their forbears.

He wanted children to read good poems which helped them to become patriotic and dutiful. He believed, as expressed in the preface of his *Kabigatha* (1877), that true nationalism would grow in India only when the people became serious about safeguarding their national interests. And this seriousness would come, he pointed out, only when they shed lethargy and sincerely practised self-purification, instead of merely criticizing the British Government.

Truthful and dutiful, Dwarakanath typified in his character the best of the humaneness in Bengal. He died at the age of 54 on 27 June 1898.

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JADULAL MALLICK

A man of fearless and independent character, Jadulal Mallick, the adopted son of Matilal Mallick, the millionaire of Pathurighata, was born on 29 April 1844. Educated at the Oriental Seminary, the Hindu School and Presidency College, he grew into a towering figure in society commanding respect from all quarters for his mental attainments and integrity of character. As Vice-President of the British Indian Association, he was a tower of strength to many of its public movements. An Honorary Magistrate and a nominated Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipality from 1873 to 1885, he made his mark in public life as an outspoken denouncer of both municipal and Government measures, which were injurious to the interests of the people. An eminent orator and debater, he was called "the fighting cock" by Sir Henry Harrison, Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality.

A FEARLESS CRITIC

A fearless critic of the Government's ill-conceived public measures, he protested, while waiting upon Lord Dufferin at Govern-

ment House, against the imposition of a salt tax in 1888 upon the poor masses of India. This irritated the Viceroy into insinuating that some sort of gratification had probably induced Jadulal to plead with him for the people's cause. Prompt came Jadulal's retort: "This is not the practice of the Eastern people, but of the Western". In January and February 1891 he, together with other members of the British Indian Association, played a prominent role in the public agitation against the Age of Consent Bill, which was condemned as an unnecessary interference on the part of the Government with the Hindu religion. The resultant anti-British feeling became a matter of deep concern to the Government.

DEFENDER OF HIS COUNTRYMEN'S RIGHTS

Another public agitation in which Jadulal played a conspicuous part was the one against the Government's abolition of the jury system in certain cases by the Calcutta Gazette Notification of 20 October 1892. Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, issued this Notification in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by section 269 of the Criminal Procedure Code. It came into force from 1 November 1892. The impression Elliott had gathered from the Shambazar Riot Case and the Dacca Bribery Case, involving Ananda Chandra Roy, was that Indian jurors intentionally acquitted many guilty persons. And this impression came to be deepened by the unfavourable reports on the working of the jury system as a means for the repression of crime submitted to the Government by many European officials, including the District Judges of the 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Burdwan, Murshidabad, Nadia, Dacca and Patna, in reply to the Judicial Circular of 23 June 1890. On the other hand, Rajendra Lal Lahiri (Secretary to the Krishnagar Bar Library), Ram Chandra Mukherji (Government Pleader of Nadia), the Public Prosecutor of Hooghly, Keshab Chandra Roy (Secretary to the Hooghly Bar Association) and Shyama Charan Haldar (Muktear, Hooghly) gave their opinions in favour of the jury system. As for Justices Chandra Madhav Ghose and Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya, they categorically maintained that the jury system never favoured the escape of criminals (Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary of 10 November 1892).

In spite of the favourable Indian opinion, the Notification was enforced. It dealt a crippling blow on the jury system by declaring that offences against the public tranquillity, etc., were henceforth to

be tried by Judges in consultation with assessors, whose views would, however, not be binding upon the former. Actually, the Government deprived Indians of a right which they had efficiently exercised for thirty years. The 'Hindoo Patriot' of 10 November 1892 showed by figures from the Bengal Administrative Reports for eight successive years that Indian jurors had always admirably lived up to their responsibility: only 2 per cent of the verdicts given by juries had been reversed by the High Court Judges, while not less than 16 per cent of the decisions passed by Judges in cases not tried by jury had been set aside by that Court on appeal. Besides, it was regrettable that, when the Congress was clamantly demanding its extension throughout the country, the system should have been virtually abolished even in the seven districts of Bengal where it had been in force.

Public meetings were convened at Bhowanipore and the Calcutta Town Hall to condemn the Notification. The Bhowanipore meeting, held on 19 December 1892, was attended by more than 5,000 people. But of greater moment was the mammoth meeting held at the Town Hall on 20 December 1892. Thousands had to go away disappointed for want of accommodation. This meeting, presided over by Maharaja Durga Charan Laha, was addressed by Jadulal Mallick, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar and Lal Mohan Ghosh. Among the European speakers were Pugh, 'Tiger' Jackson and Turner. 'Tiger' Jackson pointed out that European officials were determined to check the progress of the Bengalees, because of their success at the Civil Service Examinations as well as because of their efficient discharge of high official duties. Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, who had let down his countrymen in 1878 by supporting the Vernacular Press Act, redeemed much of his lost prestige by actively participating in the agitation against Elliott's Jury Notification. As for Jadulal Mallick, his oratory, fortified with irrefutable arguments, made him appear as the most unbending and formidable opponent of the Government in this matter. Two Muslims, Seraj-ul-Islam and Abu Reza, Bar-at-Law, also attended the Town Hall meeting.

A petition was sent by the agitators to Parliament. Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy, sent a Despatch in haste defending the action of the Bengal Government. The contention of the Despatch was, however, torn to shreds by the arguments of Manomohan Ghosh. Lord Kimberley, the Liberal Secretary of State, ordered, in February 1893, the appointment of a Jury Commission instead of asking the Bengal Government to withdraw the Notification. The Jury Commis-

sion, presided over by Mr. Justice Prinsep and with Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore and Sir Ramesh Chandra Mitra as its members, recommended the withdrawal of the obnoxious Notification in March 1893. This became a great occasion for unbounded joy all over Bengal.

A TERROR TO THE MUNICIPALITY

It is also interesting to note that Jadulal was a terror to the Municipality, dominated by autocratic and unimaginative English officials. As a prominent member of the Rate-payers' Association, he played a very important part in the agitation against the levy of exorbitant ratings from the owners of *bustees* in the town. Under the Calcutta Municipal Act (Bengal Act II) of 1888 *bustee*-owners were required to pay municipal taxes for their tenants as well. But as these owners could not in many cases recover the rents of their lands from their tenants without going to the Small Cause Court, they found in the new Act nothing but a prolific source of oppression. The indifference of the Government to the problem led Jadulal to stop the payment of the *bustee* tax to the Municipality. Several others, particularly the poorer rate-payers, followed suit. Mr. Harrison, the autocratic Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality, first issued a summons and then a warrant against Jadulal and at last proceeded to recover the amount due from him by distraining his movable property (all his horses and carriages). As pointed out by the *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika* of 19 February 1890, this was an unjust and ill-advised act on the part of Harrison. Jadulal instituted a suit against the Municipality in the High Court. After a hearing of eight days, he won the case and obtained damages from the Municipality. The *Bangavasi* of 13 May 1892 boldly suggested that Harrison should be made to pay the expenses incurred by the Municipality over the case. That was the only way to check the reckless conduct of municipal officers. However, because of his high-handedness and indiscretion, which was denounced by Mr. Justice E. J. Trevelyan, Harrison was forthwith transferred from the Calcutta Municipality. Besides, many hands in the Warrants Office were sacked. Commenting on the case, the *Statesman* of 6 May 1892 wrote: "There are few things more inspiring than the sight of a man engaged in resisting with all his might an illegal action. . . . It is such examples that contribute more than anything else to the making of great nations and unfortunately they are badly needed in this country. Baboo

Jadoo Laul Mullick has done a public service, for which he deserves a civic crown, in fighting against the Calcutta Corporation a battle in which it might well have seemed . . . that the chances were heavily against him". By exposing the irregularities and high-handedness of the Calcutta Municipality he saved the poorer rate-payers from harassment at the hands of the municipal bailiff.

All this apart, Jadulal and several other protesters against the new Municipal Act held a public meeting at the Town Hall on 9 May 1890, where it was decided to submit a Memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor. This Memorial, praying for the reduction of municipal ratings on *bustees*, was submitted by the leading men of Calcutta, but the Lieutenant-Governor, unfortunately, rejected it outright, making the Government thereby more unpopular with the people.

A CONGRESSITE

Jadulal was a keen supporter of the Congress. Government titles and honours had no charm for him, and the Government also desisted from conferring upon him any title or honour because of his outspokenness.

A PROGRESSIVE

He tried to abolish the dowry system among the *subarnabaniks* of Saptagram. To attain this purpose, a meeting was held on his initiative at Saptagram in June 1879.

His princely donations for spreading education among the poor as well as for relieving the distress of widows gave him a high standing in society.

A great patriot, spurning Government titles and fearlessly criticizing all official actions which were prejudicial to the interests of his countrymen, Jadulal Mallick passed away on 5 February 1894.

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TRAILOKYANATH MITRA

A brilliant student of the Calcutta University, Trailokyanath Mitra, son of Jaigopal Mitra, was born on 2 May 1844 at Konniagar in the Hooghly District. An M. A. and D. L., he was successful both as a teacher and legal practitioner. He was the Tagore Professor of Law in the University of Calcutta in 1879.

He was also a public figure, having been associated with the Serampore Municipality as Chairman for some time. As a member of the Indian National Congress, he played a very important role in its deliberations at the Madras session in 1887. When popular feeling had run high against Lytton's Arms Act, which Surendranath Banerjea and others wanted to be repealed outright, Trailokyanath, practical-minded as he was, urged its liberal administration, recommending that all persons who were certified by local and municipal authorities should be authorized to carry arms. Subsequently, the Congress no longer called for the absolute repeal of the Arms Act, and the Government also gave up the policy of licensing arms on grounds of racialism in deference to popular feeling.

Universally respected, Trailokyanath Mitra, who was Calcutta University's Dean of the Faculty of Law in 1892 and a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, died at Bhowanipore on 8 April 1895.

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CHANDRANATH BASU

A well-known essayist and literary critic, Chandranath Basu, son of Sitanath Basu, was born at Kaikala in the Hooghly district on 31 August 1844. Educated at the Oriental Seminary and the Presidency College from where he creditably graduated in 1865, he took his M. A. degree in History in 1866, and the following year he passed the B. L. Examination, with Rash Behari Ghose, the eminent lawyer.

Restless in spirit, he changed from one occupation to another—

advocate of the Calcutta High Court, Deputy Magistrate for six months in 1868, Principal of Jaipur College, Superintendent of the Bengal Library in 1871—until he finally cast anchor in the post of Bengali Translator to the Government of Bengal in July 1887. From this post he retired on 1 January 1904. However, it was literature and the problems of the country that occupied most of his attention during his lifetime.

MENTAL AWAKENING

From his school days Chandranath took an active interest in debates and discussions. He was one of the sponsors of the Oriental Debating Club, where he and his advanced schoolmates read interesting papers and participated in heated discussions. The debating Club at the Presidency College offered Chandranath and his classmates the opportunity to develop their power of thinking as well as of speech. He and his friends were fortunate enough to get the inspiring guidance of their sympathetic professor, Peary Charan Sircar. It was with his unstinted aid that they were able to bring out the shortlived 'Calcutta University Magazine' in 1865.

During his post-academic career he took a keen interest in the activities of the Bethune Society which offered enough scope for discussion of the problems of the country. On 25 April 1878, Chandranath read before the Society a paper on 'High Education in India', wherein he condemned the iniquitous caste system. An essayist of the renaissance in Bengal, he also, as Bipin Chandra Pal points out, contributed his mite to the development of a sense of nationalism in the country in the second half of the nineteenth century.

POLITICAL AWARENESS

He was a critic of Sir George Campbell's policy to restrict the avenues of higher education in Bengal. He attended and spoke effectively at the conference held under the auspices of the British Indian Association on 2 July 1870 to protest against the Government's myopic policy of abolishing some first-grade colleges in the interests of primary education only. This conference, attended by a large number of mofussil delegates, was presided over by Ramanath Tagore.

He was also a very vocal member of the Indian Association established on 26 July 1876.

ECONOMIC IDEAS

Chandranath drew the attention of the public to the necessity of encouraging Indian manufactures. In his paper, entitled "Present Social and Economic Condition of Bengal and its probable future", read before the Bengal Social Science Association on 21 January 1869, he urged upon the Government to encourage Indian industries. In the same paper, he stressed the point that it was the Government's duty to promote mass education, which alone could create a feeling of community amongst the classes. He felt that "an enlightened sense of material suffering" would excite mutual sympathy amongst the peasants. This sympathy could be made to conduce to a spirit of combination, which, cutting across individual and family segregation, would not only effect important changes in the economy of agriculture, but also lead to the establishment of satisfactory relations between the cultivator on the one hand and the landlord and the capitalist on the other.

He felt that the development of Indian industries would attract capital which either lay idle or was spent on unproductive purposes. The success of this move would encourage wealthy manufacturers to improve the condition of the peasants by introducing new and scientific machines for bettering agriculture. It was to their advantage to teach the peasants the use of new implements. All this apart, the development of Indian industries would open up new avenues of employment for the educated Bengalees. Lastly, he pointed out, the growth of Indian industries—cloth, paper, knife, etc.—would make Indian businessmen realize the necessity of establishing a more friendly relationship with Britain.

A younger contemporary of Bholanath Chandra, a friend and disciple of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and for some time President of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, Chandranath Basu died on 20 June 1910.

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GANESH CHUNDER CHUNDER

Son of Kasinath Chunder, Ganesh Chunder Chunder was born in Calcutta in 1844. He was a well-known attorney of Calcutta. Apart from working as an Honorary Presidency Magistrate in 1876, he was Deputy Sheriff of Calcutta for six years, a Municipal Commissioner from 1876 to 1892, a Fellow of the Calcutta University and a member of the Legislative Council for two years.

POLITICAL AWARENESS

As a member of the British Indian Association, of which he was also Vice-President for one year, he actively participated in all its movements launched to safeguard the interests of his countrymen. An opponent of Lytton's Vernacular Press Act, he was appointed a member of the Committee set up at a public meeting in 1878, with Ananda Mohan Basu as its Secretary, to draw up a petition to Parliament against the Act. His powerful speeches in support of the Ilbert Bill of 1883 showed how bitterly opposed he was to the British policy of racialism.

He was intimately associated with the Indian National Congress. As can be gathered from the 'Bangavasi' of 28 February 1891, he played an active part, together with Devaprasad Sarbadhikari, Surendranath Pal Chowdhury, Karunasindhu Mukhopadhyaya, Bipradas Mukhopadhyaya, Bhudar Bhattacharya and Lal Bihari Basak, in holding a mammoth meeting on 25 February 1891 at the Maidan to voice the people's protest against the Age of Consent Bill. The tearing agitation against the Bill, which was condemned as an unwarrantable interference with the religion of the Hindus, conduced to the mounting anti-British feeling in society. Even the Muslims were at one with the conservative Hindus in opposing this Bill fathered in the Viceroy's Council by Sir Andrew Scoble. Though conservative in character, this massive movement tremendously strengthened the feeling of nationality in the country.

He was one of the most active supporters of the aims of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.

He died on 3 July 1914.

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WOMES CHUNDER BONNERJEE

The leader of the Congress movement in Bengal of his time, Womes Chunder Bonnerjee, son of Girish Chunder Bonnerjee, an attorney, was born at Kidderpore on 29 December 1844. Educated at the Oriental Seminary and the Hindu School, he was articled first to W. P. Downing and then to W. F. Gillanders, both attorneys, before being sent to England in 1864 to study Law on Rustomji Jamsetji Jeejeebhai Scholarship. He was called to the Bar by the Society of the Middle Temple on 11 June 1867. After returning to Calcutta, he joined the Bar of the Calcutta High Court in November 1868. His wide and lucrative practice led to his appointment as the first Indian Standing Counsel to the Government of India. He was the first President of the Indian National Congress in 1885. He also presided over the Allahabad Congress of 1892. A Fellow of the Calcutta University and President of its Law Faculty, he represented the University in the Bengal Legislative Council for the years 1894 and 1895. He went to England in May 1902 and stood as a Liberal candidate from Walthamstow for election to the House of Commons. But his failing health compelled him to withdraw from the contest at the eleventh hour. He practised in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council from June 1902 to July 1906.

During his first sojourn in England he was instrumental in establishing the London India Society in 1865, which was subsequently merged in the East Indian Association. The Society devoted itself to publicizing Indian questions in England. In 1888, he set up, with the help of Dadabhai Naoroji, the London Agency which tried to enlighten English public opinion on Indian questions.

ADVOCATE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Womes Chunder was a staunch advocate of representative government in India. At the London India Society's meeting of 25 July 1865, he gave a talk in which he strongly pleaded for the introduction of representative and responsible government in India. A popular government alone, he pointed out, could help the Indian community to emerge from darkness to light; and to pave the way for the advent of this popular government, it was desirable that Indians were entrusted with greater responsibility in the administration as well as in the Councils of India.

As President of the first session of the Indian National Congress

at Bombay in 1885, he advocated that India should be given self-rule of the Canadian type. During his brief stay in England in 1888, his powerful advocacy of the cause, ably supported by Dadabhai Naoroji, convinced many Englishmen of its justness.

His speeches in England tried to create a strong public opinion against the retrograde and unrepresentative character of the legislatures established in India under the Act of 1861. Particularly important was his Northampton speech of 21 August 1888, in which he pinpointed the lack of responsible government in India. The Secretary of State for India monopolized all power, yet he, together with his Council, was completely ignorant of the true state of things in India. For his knowledge of Indian affairs he was dependent on information from the Viceroy, whose own source of information was nothing better than the European District Officers, who never judged any problem from the Indian viewpoint.

That apart, the Viceroy's Council never reflected Indian wishes and interests. It was "a hothouse" for ideas which Englishmen brought to India after they had been scouted in England. These were imposed upon the people, notwithstanding their loud protest and vehement opposition.

The promulgation of the Age of Consent Bill in 1891 in complete disregard of the feelings of the people was another instance of the callous and shifting policy of the Government, backed up by a submissive and unrepresentative Council. This was pointed out by him in his presidential address at the Allahabad Congress of 1892. The Indian agitation against the Bill was ignored, because it did not have the backing of Europeans. And nothing could be more fatuous, said he, than telling Indians that they would not be considered fit for any important political reform as long as their social system remained backward, that is, as long as their daughters and widows remained indoors. What a plea for withholding political reforms in India!

As a matter of fact, he held the unrepresentative character of the Viceroy's Council responsible for the sorry state of things in India. Though there were a few Indian members, they were as pointed out by him in his Skating Ring (Croydon) speech of 14 October 1888, absolutely incapable of taking any active or intelligent part in the proceedings of the Council on account of their inability to understand English. Elected representatives alone, he felt, could do away with the farce of having unintelligent and servile Indians in

the Councils. Thus, in his presidential address at Allahabad in 1892, he strongly pleaded for the expansion of the Legislative Councils on the basis of the elective principle. Such representative Councils alone could give wholesome laws in conformity with the wishes and aspirations of the people.

In 1890, together with Surendranath Banerjea and others, he went to England as a member of the Congress delegation to press for political reforms. The measure of the delegation's success was the Indian Councils Act of 1892.

A CRITIC OF THE JUDICIARY

The Ilbert Bill agitation of 1883 revealed to Womes Chunder not merely the degrading political status of India but also the racial hostility of Europeans towards Indians. Though he defended Surendranath Banerjea in the Contempt of Court case in 1883, he was well aware that the latter could not escape punishment at the hands of the European Judges of the High Court.

He could never reconcile himself to Sir James F. Stephen's Amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code in 1870. The "Draconian severity" of this Amendment was held up to ridicule by him in his Northampton speech of August 1888. By taking away the finality from the verdict of the jury it left a convicted person completely at the mercy of the judicial officers. Worse still was the manner in which a convict's sentence came to be raised by the higher court on appeal from the judgement of the lower court. Womes Chunder cited the instance of a poor man who, after being sentenced to hard labour for five years, was sentenced to death by the High Court on appeal.

He also vehemently criticized Sir James's Evidence Act, according to which the previous conviction of any accused might be cited as evidence at any stage of his criminal trial. In other words, a man's conviction in 1830 for bigamy might be cited as evidence against him when he was hauled up before the court of law for his guilt of pickpocketing in 1880.

As President of the Allahabad Congress of 1892, he condemned the Jury Notification of Sir Charles Elliott, which virtually throttled the jury system in Bengal. The Notification was withdrawn in March 1893. Soon after, he strongly urged the extension of the jury system in Bengal. His argument was, as explained by him in his speech at the Poona Congress of 1895, that "a judge, translating in his mind the

vernacular of a rustic witness, was too engrossed with the language to attend properly to the witness". Indian jurors, on the other hand, could not only understand the language of the witness but also distinguish the truth from the false in his evidence.

W. C. Bonnerjee was outspoken in his criticism of the Law of Sedition (Chalmers' Bill), which, in spite of the objections of Jay Govinda Law in the Viceroy's Council, was passed as Act IV of 1898 to the great dismay of the public. The Poona Plague riots, the trial of Balgangadhar Tilak and other newspaper editors in 1897, the Chapekar case, all this led the government to believe that a rebellion was looming in the western horizon of India. Wild rumours about a possible rising were spread by the Times of India and the Englishman. The spreading unrest both in Bombay and Bengal in 1897 was treated by the authorities as a sign of growing disaffection among the people. The raising of the Tilak Fund in Bengal to finance Tilak's appeal to the Privy Council was the measure of the Bengalees' hatred for the Amendments of Sections 124A and 505 in the Criminal Procedure Code proposed in the Indian Council first by Sir Henry Prinsep and then carried through by Mr. Chalmers. According to Section 153A, which amended Section 124A, a person could be held guilty of sedition even for words, either spoken or written, which were likely to bring the Government into hatred or contempt, or excite ill-will against it. Chalmers argued on 21 December 1897 that this was necessary, because India was a country of diverse races and sects. The hostility between Hindus and Muslims, subtly played up by the Government, was used as a plea by Chalmers to justify the Amendments (including that of Section 505) which attempted to silence the voice of every Indian patriot.

Womes Chunder pointed out that Indians would have had no objection to Chalmers' Bill if they were given the same machinery for the administration of the law as existed in England. To him, it was positively dangerous to empower District Magistrates to try cases of sedition. In the Presidency towns, he suggested, such trials should be held with the help of Indian jurors, since no European jury would understand a seditious speech or article in the vernacular.

At the Amraoti session of the Congress in 1897, he also severely criticized Regulation III of 1818, which, by deporting and detaining persons in prison without trial, made a farce of justice in India.

ADVOCATE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE PRESS

Undaunted by the proposed Amendments in the Indian Penal Code, Womes Chunder advocated, at the Amraoti Congress of 1897, the freedom of speech and of the Press. Without these freedoms, he felt that there could be no political progress of the country.

DENOUNCER OF EXPLOITATION

The economic exploitation of India by the British was condemned by him in his Wainfleet speech of August 1888. He pointed out that ruthless exploitation added to the poverty of his countrymen. The salt tax was a shameless levy on the people, the overwhelming majority of whom were not sure of two square meals a day.

THE NATIONALIST

Womes Chunder was a staunch advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. In his presidential speech at the Bombay session of the Congress in 1885, he made it clear that the Congress represented all classes and communities in India. He stressed this point more emphatically while proposing Badruddin Tyabji as President of the Congress at its Madras session in 1887. He said, "We should be in fact, as we are in thought, one community and one country. . . .". He assured all that the representative government the Congress wanted would not be inimical to the interests of Muhammedan fellow-countrymen.

CONCLUSION

The Calcutta session of the Congress in 1901 was the last session attended by him before his departure to England. At this session he wholeheartedly supported the resolution which urged the British authorities to give effect to the House of Commons Resolution of 2 June 1893 in regard to the holding of simultaneous Civil Service Examinations in England and India.

Though a patriot, he was severely criticized by the *Bangavasi* of 18 December 1897 for spending almost the whole of his fabulous income, not in India, but in England. He was accused of draining out India's wealth like Woodroffe, the prince of barristers in Calcutta. The *Bangavasi* also attacked him for "eating and dressing like a European". This criticism cannot, however, detract from the merit of his political work in India. That he was essentially a patriotic Indian at heart is shown by his disapproval of the election of Mr. Webb, an

Irish M.P., as President of the Congress at its Madras session in 1894. He desired that the Congress President should always be an Indian, save in exceptional circumstances. This apart, his letter of 3 November 1905 from Croydon to his cousin, Krishna Lall Bandyopadhyaya, shows how patriotic an Indian he was in his support of the anti-Partition agitation in Bengal. He wrote: "I keenly sympathize with the *Swadeshi* movement. It shows that the spirit of nationality still animates us and, I am sure, if properly persisted in it will end in doing good to us, not only in exciting proper attention to Indian affairs in the country but in knitting us together and reviving our industries and industrial life". These words constitute an eloquent testimony to Womes Chunder's patriotism and genuine feeling of nationality.

In sober counsel and wise guidance he was without a peer among his compatriots. A moderate, he spent the last days of his life at Croydon in England, where he passed away on 21 June 1906.

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CHANDI CHARAN SEN

Son of Nimchand Sen, Chandi Charan Sen was born in January 1845 at Basanda in the district of Backerganj.

After passing the Entrance Examination from the Barisal Government School in 1863, he was forced by straitened circumstances to discontinue his college studies and go in for the Lower and Higher Grade Pleadership Examinations at Dacca. He passed these Examinations in 1868 and 1869 respectively and joined the Dacca Bar. In March 1873, he gave up his practice and entered Government Service as a Munsiff.

A PATRIOTIC WRITER

Chandi Charan, who was a Brahmo, is remembered for his contributions to Bengali literature. He always wrote with a purpose, and it was either to expose the evils prevailing in society or to promote national feeling among his countrymen. The main purpose behind his Bengali rendering of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was to make his countrymen conscious, just as Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe succeeded in doing in America, of the crying evils which tended to warp the moral fibre of society.

His ascent to fame as a purposeful writer was facilitated by the publication of some of his historical novels, all glowing with a strong patriotic fervour, for which he was taken to task by the Government. These were *Maharaja Nandakumar* (1885), *Ayodhyar Begum* (1886) and *Jhansir Rane* (1888).

His *Lankakandam* (1883) was a powerful satire on the principles and motives which governed the political activities of pretentious Bengalees. He wanted them to be sincere in purpose and self-sacrificing in spirit if they truly desired the political progress of their country.

Courage of conviction marked almost all the activities of Chandi Charan Sen. He died on 10 June 1906.

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JOGENDRANATH VIDYABHUSAN

One of the most virile thinkers of the nineteenth century, Jogendranath Vidyabhusan, son of Umesh Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, was born at Simhat in the Ranaghat Subdivision on 12 July 1845. Educated at the C.M.S. School and the Sanskrit College, Jogendranath, after passing the M.A. Examination in 1872, worked as a teacher prior to his appointment as Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector in November 1880.

A man of varied interests and broad outlook, well read in Western political history and philosophy and very purposive in his writings, he was as a positivist a peg above both John Stuart Mill and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. His shortlived monthly journal,

Arya-darsan (1878), which he personally edited, helped him to come into the limelight as a vigorous advocate of the political ideas which led to the overthrow of reactionary regimes in Europe as well as to the unification of Germany and Italy in the nineteenth century. His biographies of great men of Europe and India, in addition to his essays on political and social problems having a bearing on Indian interests, were all meant to mould the character and minds of his countrymen in such a way as to make them think and labour for the welfare of their country.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

An admirer of Vidyasagar, he took as his second wife an 18-year-old widow in the teeth of vehement opposition from his orthodox relatives and friends. Sivanath Sastri stood by his side and Vidyasagar is said to have borne practically all the expenses of the marriage. This bold act of his was warmly welcomed by the progressives. But his radical views on hereditary succession, which he held responsible for the existence of drones, intemperance and other evil habits among the sybarites in society, could not find many followers.

An outspoken critic of social evils and a high priest of equality, Jogendranath held inequality of caste, of wealth and of sex responsible for the degeneration of India. He also ascribed this degeneration partly to the linguistic and sartorial differences of Indians. It was his firm conviction that there could be no unity in India until inequality was removed.

POLITICAL IDEAS

He held that the achievement of unity was dependent upon the development of a sense of nationalism in India. Equality could conduce to the growth of this sense, without which Indians would not be able to retain their independence even if it were graciously conceded to them by the British.

Nationalism implied a sense of belonging, patriotism and a spirit of self-sacrifice. He held up Mazzini as an exemplar of all these qualities before his countrymen. Without these qualities Indians could never hope to liberate their motherland from foreign rule.

However, what Indians needed most to achieve freedom was unity. If they could unite even for one day, forgetting their racial, social and religious differences, it would be a sufficient ground for thinking that the fortunes of India were rising. Not merely the removal

of inequality and other differences, but also the abandonment of mutual recrimination and parochialism was necessary for the attainment of unity. He thus requested the sponsors of the *Hindu Mela* to change its name into *Bharat Mela*, so that it could rise above the reproach of narrowness which had long been the bane of India.

Jogendranath was probably one of the first Indians to point out the necessity of having a *lingua franca* in the interest of Indian unity. And the language best suited to serve this purpose was, according to him, Hindi. Apart from being the language of the majority in India, Hindi was also intelligible to a certain extent to a large number of non-Hindi speaking Indians. All told, he made it perfectly clear that without a national language there could not be any national unity in the country. The use of English by the leaders of the Indian Association of 1876 pained him very much. The Indian masses, he wrote, could never be inspired by speeches in English.

To awaken the political consciousness of his countrymen as well as to widen the basis of the proposed Indian Association, he suggested in 1875 that it should hold its annual meetings in different cities of India like Calcutta, Allahabad, Lahore, Bombay, Madras and Lucknow.

When the Indian Association was actually established on 26 July 1876, he felt that it would succeed in inspiring among Indians not only a partial sense of nationalism, but also a small measure of unity through its memorials against British oppression. He believed that the Indian Association would be able to teach Indians to dedicate their lives to the cause of national welfare, to love one another, to forge a political bond rising above their communal, religious and social differences and to voice in unison their grievances against England.

26 July was to him the day of India's rebirth. It was on this day that India's new political creed was reborn. In the eye of this creed Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, theists, deists and atheists were all equal. To be initiated into this creed the only qualification required of a person was that he should be an Indian. Membership of the Indian Association was open to all—*rajās*, *zamindars* and the common people. They were all welcomed in a spirit of brotherliness. All this shows what an unshakable faith he had in the ideals of the Indian Association, the first middle-class political organization in India.

Holding up the examples of Garibaldi and Mazzini before his countrymen, he urged them not to relax their endeavours to unite their country and to lead it to freedom. He himself did not mind going to hell if his death could help the redemption of his beloved country from damnation. He wanted to see his motherland, not divided, but united. He prayed to God that strength might be given to his countrymen to enable them to usher in a new era in the history of their country with the cry, *Bande Mataram*, *Haricharanarabindam*.

A republican at heart, he always believed that the best form of government was based on the consent of the people and that sovereignty lay with the people. Influenced by the liberal political thought of the West, he advocated in more than one of his articles the necessity of having a government in India which was truly representative of the people.

PROMOTER OF THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGE

Jogendranath wrote all his inspiring articles and biographies in Bengali. The neglect of Bengali by his countrymen caused him great pain. He was of opinion that profound ideas innate in Sanskrit literature found no expression in Bengali, because whoever tried to do so and make it a means of his livelihood was sure to face starvation. Bengalees were indifferent to writers of good Bengali literature. Bengalee students had not yet overcome the habit of buying only school textbooks. Their attitude to those who served the Bengali language was one of contempt. One who spoke and wrote in English was held in high esteem. It was their belief that no noble thought could be expressed in Bengali. Bengali was looked down upon as the language of the slave, and those who expressed themselves in that language were also treated as slaves. Jogendranath deplored the tendency on the part of his countrymen to go about in borrowed plumes and to crow in a foreign tongue. He warned that it was most unreasonable on their part to take pride in what was not theirs and what could never be theirs. He, therefore, wanted Bengalees to cultivate their mother tongue and to enrich it by taking gems from other languages. His patriotic love of the Bengali language was not misunderstood by his educated countrymen. They made him, towards the close of his life, the Vice-President of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*.

Well known for his spirit of patriotism, Jogendranath Vidyabhusan died on 12 June 1904.

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NABAKANTA CHATTOPADHYAYA

Essentially a social reformer, Nabakanta Chattopadhyaya, son of Kasikanta Chattopadhyaya, was born in October 1845 at Paschimpara in Bikrampur (Dacca). A few years after passing the Entrance Examination in 1861 he became a teacher in Dacca Jagannath School. In 1869, he, together with some of his friends, embraced Brahmoism under the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Very progressive in his views, he helped the establishment of the *Dacca Subhasadhinnee Sabha*, which was dedicated to the cause of social reform. Checking intemperance among the people, spreading female education and disseminating useful knowledge among the masses were its most important aims. Nabakanta worked hard for the realization of these aims. He was actively associated with the vernacular paper, *Surabish*, which attempted to make the people of Dacca aware of the harmful effects of drinking. For the moral uplift of young men a Sunday school was opened at Dacca, where lessons on morality and healthy life were imparted by Nabakanta and his collaborators.

Nabakanta was aware that social regeneration was considerably dependent on bettering the lot of women in society. It was thus necessary to free them from the clutches of oppressive and unreasonable social customs. To prevent child marriage, he established the *Balya Bibaha Nibarani Sabha* (Society for the Prevention of Child Marriage). The organ of this society was the monthly, *Mahapap Balya Bibaha*. His more eminent brother, Sitalakanta Chattopadhyaya, worked as his coadjutor in this field of activity. Both brothers endeavoured through the Society to stop polygamy in Dacca as well as to promote widow remarriage.

All this apart, Nabakanta did his best to spread education among the women of Dacca. It was on his initiative that the Dacca Adult Female School, subsequently called the Eden Female School, came

to be established, with himself as its Secretary. Later, he again took the initiative in establishing the *Antabpur Stree Siksha Sabha* at Paschimpara to educate married women. Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, Durga Mohan Das and many others highly praised Nabakanta for his selfless devotion to the cause of women's education and emancipation. Even the Government came forward to help his institution with an annual aid of Rs 150.

Nabakanta's English journal, the 'East', did much to arouse the social consciousness of the people in Dacca. His brother, Sitalakanta, was associated with it for some time.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Nabakanta was intimately connected with the Dacca People's Association, which helped to propagate the political ideas of the Indian Association. It helped to awaken the political consciousness of the Dacca people. Editorials and articles of the 'East' also conduced to this awakening.

A writer of repute, the livewire of the social reform movement in Dacca and a zealous advocate of women's emancipation, Nabakanta Chattopadhyaya died at Dacca in September 1904.

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RAJKRISHNA MUKHOPADHYAYA

Son of Anandachandra Mukhopadhyaya, Rajkrishna Mukhopadhyaya was born at Goswami-Durgapur in Nadia on 31 October 1845.

A brilliant student, Rajkrishna passed the Entrance and F.A. Examinations from the Krishnagar College in 1861 and 1863 respectively, and graduated from the Presidency College in 1866. In 1867, he passed the M.A. Examination in Philosophy and took the B.L. degree the following year, standing second in the First Class.

He practised at the bar and then taught Philosophy and Law at the Berhampore College before joining Presidency College as

Professor of Philosophy on a temporary basis. From January 1879 to 1886 he worked as Translator to the Government of Bengal.

A PATRIOT

Historian of the renaissance in Bengal, as Bepin Chandra Pal describes him, his brief history of Bengal in Bengali (90 pages) was a source of great inspiration to his countrymen. Mainly a social history full of interesting matter, it elicited praise even from such a fastidious man as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. It conduced to the growing sense of nationalism in Bengal in the seventies of the 19th century.

In his poem, *Bharatmata*, he drew the attention of his countrymen to the poverty of India. Goddess Lakshmi, he said, had taken refuge in the person of Queen Victoria. She would never return to the country until the people woke up from their slumber.

In his essay, *Bharat Mahima*, he regretted the decline of the indigenous textile industry as a result of the increasing dependence of his countrymen upon the textile goods of Manchester. Recalling the past glory and culture of the country, he lamented that India, which was once the home of arithmetic, algebra and chemistry, should look to the West for receiving a smattering of science. This attitude was all the more shameful, because India, which was the birthplace of Buddhism, had begun to look upon the West as its new spiritual preceptor. Regretting that Indians had forgotten all about their glorious past, he urged them to strive hard to put an end to the deplorable conditions of their life for which they were more to blame than anything else.

Any new institution that tended to promote the interests of Indians received his prompt support. Thus he came forward to support the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science in 1876 by becoming an active member of its executive committee. To promote the political interests and aspirations of the middle classes, he became a member of the Indian Association in July 1876. He died on 10 October 1886.

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TARAPADA BANDYOPADHYAYA

Born in a middle-class Brahmin family of Katwa about 1845(?), Tarapada Bandyopadhyaya completed his academic career by graduating in Law from the Krishnagar College. He then joined the Krishnagar Bar and steadily rose to be its most eminent member. Well versed in Criminal Law, he wrote a masterly treatise on the Law of Evidence.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As the inaugurator of public movements in Krishnagar, Tarapada Bandyopadhyaya did much to spread political consciousness among the people of that ancient town during the last two decades of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century. It was he who first suggested that a National Fund be raised as a memento of Surendranath Banerjea's imprisonment in 1883. It was a fruitful conception, for it led to the raising of other national funds for national purposes. The amount collected on the initiative of Tarapada was Rs. 20,000, and this was placed at the disposal of the Indian Association for the promotion of political work. It became most useful in the anti-Partition agitation, in which Tarapada himself, as the leader of the boycott movement in Krishnagar, played a prominent role. In 1905, he convened a mammoth public meeting at the Krishnagar Town Hall, which was addressed by Surendranath Banerjea, Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri and several others. At this memorable meeting of Krishnagar a large number of people took the *swadeshi* vow under the inspiring lead of Tarapada.

He was a keen supporter of the Congress and took an active part in its deliberations at Calcutta in 1906.

He also identified himself with the aims of the Bengal Provincial Conferences. He was also one of the leading spirits of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Natore in June 1897.

A PROGRESSIVE

A member of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*, Tarapada's views on social problems were progressive. He was an ardent advocate of female education. He gave this noble cause a fillip by founding at Krishnagar the Mrinalini Girls' School. Practically all its expenses were borne by him till his death.

Tarapada Bandyopadhyaya was a towering figure in the public life of Krishnagar. He passed away in 1907.

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AKSHAY CHANDRA SIRCAR

A reputed literary critic and political thinker, Akshay Chandra Sircar was born at Chinsurah on 11 December 1846. Love for vernacular literature and patriotism were qualities inherited by him from his father, Rai Gangacharan Sircar Bahadur, a scholar and litterateur, who rose to be a Sub-Judge in Government service. Gangacharan was an admirer of Harish Chandra Mukherjee. His patriotic heart could not tolerate the oppression practised by the European indigo planters in Nadia. Long before Harish Chandra made the oppressive indigo system the focal-point of public attention through the 'Hindoo Patriot', Gangacharan, while a Munsiff at Ranaghat, remonstrated with a European planter against his cruel treatment of the helpless ryots, as a result of which he was degraded and transferred to Panighata. Patriotic Gangacharan also used to write his judgements in Bengali. Lawyers were always encouraged by him to conduct and transact business in his court in Bengali.

Akshay Chandra came to be deeply influenced by the noble character and broadmindedness of his father. He creditably passed the Entrance Examination from the Hooghly Collegiate School in 1863. In 1866 he passed the 'Hooghly College Library' Examination. After graduating from the Hooghly Mohsin College in 1867, he joined the Law classes of the Presidency College and passed the B.L. Examination in the following year.

In 1868, he joined the Berhampore bar as pleader. Side by side with his practice he took a keen interest in vernacular literature and journalism. The literary circle at Berhampore, over which Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya dominated during his official stay there, received much help and guidance from Akshay Chandra. Subsequently, Chinsurah became the centre of his activities. His two journals, *Sadharani* (a weekly) and *Nabajiban* (a monthly), absorbed much of his time and energy. Though enriched by the contributions of Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Hemchandra Bandyo-

padhyaya, Indranath Bandyopadhyaya and many others, these journals proved shortlived.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A realist in political thinking, Akshay Chandra rightly pointed out that the English kept themselves so engaged in administering the land, in collecting revenue and in making laws that they found little time for promoting the welfare of Indians.

To him, the politics of the educated Indians was associated too much with begging and crying. Their political agitations succeeded only in inducing the British Government to attend to their minor grievances.

A believer in constitutionalism, he emphasized that training was necessary to make his countrymen fit for self-rule. It was idle on the part of Indians to indulge in discussions on the form of government best suited to their country as long as vices were allowed to lie deep-rooted in society.

It was only through self-help that Indians would be able to raise themselves from a condition of helplessness and degradation. Mere criticism of Government's indifference towards the development of Indian industries would not help them in any way. What could really help them was their own unremitting endeavour to improve their manufactures without looking up to the Government for aid. But if they chose to remain indolent and extravagant, the British Government, or for that matter any other form of Government, would not be able to make them self-reliant, industrious and frugal. To encourage the habit of using indigenous goods among his countrymen, he never used any British product from 1891 to 1917.

He was also an advocate of self-help in matters of social reform. Government interference with Hindu social customs, however outdated they might be, was repugnant to him. This explains his bitter opposition to the Age of Consent Bill (Act X) of 1891, which created a strong anti-British feeling in Bengal.

His articles on political problems, published from time to time in the *Sadharani*, were marked by moderation and common sense. A keen supporter of the Indian Association established on 26 July 1876, he became its Assistant Secretary. Surendranath Banerjea was in his eyes the pride of the country. If Surendranath talked too much, it must be admitted, wrote Akshay Chandra, that he talked for the country.

Akshay Chandra worked hard for the success of the second session of the Congress in Calcutta in 1886. 'A sturdy champion of the rights of the ryots', as Surendranath Banerjea calls him, he played a prominent part in the Rent Bill agitation.

PROMOTER OF VERNACULAR EDUCATION

Like his father Gangacharan, Akshay Chandra also seriously worked for the spread of vernacular education. Apart from writing thoughtful articles on the problem, he established a school, called the Sadharani School, at Chinsurah with the intention of spreading education through the medium of Bengali. He personally taught in the school for four hours every day. Though the school was closed when the *Sadharani* office was transferred to Calcutta, he continued to serve Bengali literature as zealously as he had done before. This explains the keen interest he took in the activities of the *Bangiya Sabitya Parishad*, of which he was thrice elected Assistant Secretary.

Though essentially a man of letters, his political views, because of their realistic slant, commanded wide respect. He died at Chinsurah on 2 October 1917.

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JOGESH CHANDRA DATTA

Son of Durga Charan Datta, Jogesh Chandra Datta was born on 29 January 1847 at Bowbazar in Calcutta. He was educated at the Training Academy, Metropolitan College and the Presidency College. He could not sit for the B.A. and B.L. Examination on account of the death of his elder brother. A Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipality from 1876 to 1892, he was also an Honorary Presidency Magistrate in 1876. Together with his brother, Naresh Chandra Datta, he was responsible for the launching of the '*Reis and Rayyet*' in 1882. He was associated with its management till 1915.

Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee, editor of the 'Reis and Rayyet', was his guide in the field of journalism.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Jogesh Chandra voluntarily joined the Indian League in 1875 as its joint Secretary. The other joint Secretary was Kalimohan Das. It was because of Jogesh Chandra that the Indian League persuaded the Bengal Legislative Council to adopt Act IV (The Calcutta Municipal Consolidation Act) of 1876, which led to the introduction of the principle of election in the constitution of the Calcutta Municipality. He himself was elected a Commissioner from Ward XI after the promulgation of the Act on 1 July 1876.

Jogesh Chandra detested the idea of voting an address of thanks to Lord Northbrook, the deposer of Malhar Rao Gaekwar of Baroda. When such a vote was proposed at the Town Hall meeting held on 8 April 1876 under the presidency of Sir Richard Temple, the "immortal ten" of Bengal vehemently opposed it. These "immortal ten" were Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee, Jogesh Chandra Datta, Manmatha Nath Mallick (Barrister), Jadu Nath Ghose (Headmaster, Seal's Free College), Hem Chandra Mallick, Debendra Nath Datta, Upendra Chandra Datta, Prabodh Chandra Mallick, Naresh Chandra Datta and Bhanu Chandra Datta. They "set a noble example of fearless and unselfish patriotism" by opposing the voting of an address and a statue to the deposer of the "great Mahratta chief". At the meeting it was Manmatha Nath Mallick who spoke on behalf of the "immortal ten". Though they sustained a defeat, their moral example lived for ever in the pages of Indian history.

Every movement that tended to promote the interests of his countrymen received his unstinted support. In 1878 he actively participated in the agitation against Lytton's Vernacular Press Act.

The "Great Contempt Case" of 1883 stirred his patriotic feelings so much that he eagerly came forward, together with Ananda Mohan Basu, to become bail for Surendranath Banerjea during the brief period preceding the delivery of judgement in the court of law.

Bold and honest, he was never seen wavering or hedging when called upon by his conscience to point out irregularities in Government actions. It was he who drew the attention of the Government, in his article published in the 'Reis and Rayyet' of 9 December 1899, to the irregularity of continuing the appointments of the Vice-Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation and other municipal officers

and servants without drawing up proper rules for such appointments under sub-section (3) of section 8 of the Calcutta Municipal Act (Bengal Act III) of 1899. Technically, these functionaries of the Corporation, all appointed under Bengal Act II of 1888, could not continue in their offices after the enforcement of Act III of 1899. When made aware of this irregularity, Government hastily passed Bengal Act II of 1900 to validate the appointments of the Vice-Chairman and other functionaries, including Commissioners representing the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Calcutta Trades' Association and the Calcutta Port Commissioners.

In 1903, when the Government appointed Mr. Western Chief Presidency Magistrate under the Criminal Procedure Code (India Act V) of 1898, Jogesh Chandra at once pointed out that the law permitted such an appointment only if the appointee had earlier been a Presidency Magistrate. The Government of Bengal admitted the irregularity and appointed Mr. Western first a Presidency Magistrate before promoting him within a short time to the position of the Chief Presidency Magistrate.

His literary attainments and profound legal knowledge earned him respect from both official and non-official quarters. A silent but tireless worker, Jogesh Chandra Datta remained a patriot till the last day of his eventful life.

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SIVANATH SASTRI

Son of Harananda Bhattacharya of Majilpur, Sivanath Sastri was born on 31 January 1847. A towering figure among the Brahmo progressives, he has left his mark indelibly on renascent Bengal of the nineteenth century. A man of character and integrity, faith and determination, scholarship and action, Sivanath Sastri combined his zeal for social reform with the highest patriotic motives.

Educated at the Sanskrit Collegiate School and the Sanskrit College, from where he passed the M.A. Examination in Sanskrit in 1872 and obtained the Shastri title, his academic career was strewn with distracting difficulties arising from his identification with

progressive ideas about social reform. Because of his liberal views he was liked by his uncle, Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan, a well-known stalwart of the progressive group. During the period of Dwarakanath's stay at Benares (1873-74) Sivanath edited his *Soma Prakash* and looked after his school at Harinavi. In 1874 he joined the South Suburban English School at Bhowanipore as Headmaster. Two years later he was persuaded to join the Hare School as Sanskrit teacher. But prompted by his patriotic aversion for Government service as well as by his equally patriotic sense of duty by the *Brahmo Samaj* and the country at large, he resigned his post at the Hare School on 1 March 1878.

MODEL OF SELF-RESPECT

Sivanath had a very high sense of self-respect even while young. Once Mr. Woodrow, Inspector of Schools, refused to take from him some official paper which his father had asked him to deliver on his way to the college. His trifling offence was that he had entered Woodrow's office room with his slippers on. When asked to take off his slippers outside the room and then to deliver the paper, Sivanath placed it on Woodrow's table and left in high dudgeon without caring for his future. Like outdated Hindu prejudices and customs, irrational English customs also were abhorrent to him. Cast in the patriotic mould, his young mind could not reconcile itself to anything that smacked of the racial superiority of the English.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Sivanath's aversion for Hindu prejudices and senseless customs became very pronounced after he began to consort freely with the members of the Bhowanipore *Brahmo Samaj* from 1865. While a student he was drawn into the social reform movement in Bengal. He denounced child marriage and enthusiastically advocated widow remarriage. In 1868, it was he who took the initiative in getting Jogendranath Vidyabhusan, a widower, married to an 18-year-old widow, Mahalakshmi. Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, who also exercised a great deal of influence over young Sivanath, came forward to bear almost all the expenses of this marriage. It, however, redounds to Sivanath's credit that he boldly faced all social obloquy and persecution in his unremitting endeavours to help the newly-married couple overcome the difficulties that beset their life in Calcutta. Undaunted by the wrath of his father, Sivanath came forward again to help

Upendranath Das marry the young widowed daughter of Nabakrishna Basu of Bhowanipore. The young reformers who had banded themselves into a body known as the Indian Racial League honoured Sivanath and Jogendranath at one of their meetings presided over by Upendranath.

Sivanath's zeal for social regeneration became greater after his ceremonial initiation into the *Brahmo Samaj*, together with Ananda Mohan Basu, Krishna Behari Sen, Rajaninath Roy and others, on 22 August 1869. He actually joined the group of Brahmo progressives led by Keshab Chandra Sen. Much to his father's indignation and disgust, Sivanath discarded the sacred Brahmanical thread and ceased to be idolatrous. All the threats of his father and his subsequent expulsion from home only steeled his resolution to abide by the dictates of his conscience.

Within a short time of his initiation he became one of the stalwarts of Keshab Chandra Sen's Indian Reform Association, which had some ancillary bodies dealing with "Temperance, Education, Cheap Literature and Technical Education". To promote the cause of temperance, which had already been made a great social issue by Peary Charan Sircar, he brought out a Bengali monthly called *Mad Na Garal* (Wine or Poison).

Women's emancipation was also a cause very near his heart. Any move that tended to mitigate their miseries was openly supported by him. Keshab Chandra Sen's agitation, which persuaded the Government to fix the marriageable age of girls at 14 in 1872, received his wholehearted cooperation. From the same year he chose to live with his family in Kesab Chandra Sen's *Bharatasram*—a unique experiment in middle-class communal life—and work selflessly for educating women.

Sivanath, together with Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and Nagendranath Chattopadhyaya, desired that higher education should be imparted to women. Keshab Chandra Sen's opposition to their desire led to a split in the progressive Brahmo camp. The liberals (the *Samadarshi* group), led by Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, ignored Keshab Chandra Sen's dissentient voice and established the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya* under the care of Miss Acroyd. Later, its name was changed to *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya*. Sivanath admitted his daughter, Hemlata, to this school.

The cleavage became wider when the liberals demanded that their wives be allowed to sit with them in the prayer-hall outside

the screen of seclusion. In 1872, Anandacharan Khastagir, Durga Mohan Das, Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and Rajaninath Roy forced Keshab Chandra Sen to yield to their clamant demand. Sivanath fully sympathized with the liberals on this issue.

Though Sivanath had to leave the *Bharatasram* for Harinavi, where he had to look after his uncle's interests for a year and half, he always identified himself with the liberal Brahmos. In 1877, he took the initiative in forming an 'inner circle' within the progressive camp, the aims of which unmistakably showed his patriotic spirit. The members of the 'inner circle' were all young liberals. They came together actuated by the loftiest purpose of effecting the social and political regeneration of society. They pledged themselves not to worship any idol, not to observe caste distinctions, not to work under the Government and not to marry before 21 (girls not to marry before 16). In the same pledge they decided to demand equal rights for men and women in society, to spread education and enlightenment among the masses, including women, to make their countrymen strong and courageous by encouraging them to take to physical exercise, horse-riding and rifle-shooting, to acknowledge self-rule as the only constitutional form of government, though for the present they would abide by the laws of the British Government in the interest of the future welfare of the country. But however oppressed they might be by poverty, they would never accept slavery under their foreign rulers. Rightly does Bipin Chandra Pal say that love for the country was the principal motivation behind the formation of the 'inner circle' by Sivanath. His craving for political freedom and social justice became contagious in the new group. Bipin Chandra Pal, Sundarimohan Das and Ananda Chandra Mitra strengthened it by giving in their adhesion. Sivanath inspired his compatriots further by resigning from Government service at a moment when he was not able to meet the basic needs of his family.

The marriage of Keshab Chandra Sen's minor daughter to the minor Maharaja of Cooch Behar according to the Hindu *Shastras* and in violation of Act III of 1872 led the liberals to break away completely from their revered leader and to establish, on 15 May 1878, what came to be called the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*. A source of inspiration to the newly-formed democratic Samaj, Sivanath dedicated himself solely to social service. He undertook arduous travels to different parts of India and zealously preached not only theism but also liberal social principles in the interests of the unity and progress

of his countrymen. In Madras, particularly, he severely condemned the iniquitous caste system.

MENTAL AWAKENING

Aware of the fact that proper education alone could make the younger generation lead a healthy life in the larger interests of the country, Sivanath and his friends, including Ananda Mohan Basu and Surendranath Banerjea, established the City School in January 1879. In April the same year he had a Students' Society established in Calcutta where they were taught to discuss their own affairs in a democratic manner. In 1884, he lent his support to the establishment of *Niti-Vidyalyaya* for girls in Calcutta. Whatever he might have done in this sphere of activity after 1878, discipline among students was his watchword. He wanted students to imbibe knowledge in such a spirit as not to lose their bearings in society. Indians who took to Anglicized manners were disliked by him. The Anglicized way of spelling Indian surnames was equally repulsive to him.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A born patriot inspired by the spirit of dedication, Sivanath's first calculated attempt to stir up the political consciousness of his compatriots was seen in the pledge he made the 'inner circle' of the progressive *Brahmo Samaj* take in 1877. With time he, Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Basu realized the need of setting up a middle-class political organization. To them the British Indian Association, controlled by the zamindars, was not a representative body. They thus set about their task and brought into existence the Indian Association on 26 July 1876. Its office was set up at 93, College street. Sivanath was entrusted with the duty of collecting funds for the Association, which became the forerunner of the Indian National Congress.

In April 1888, Sivanath visited England and stayed there for six months, closely studying English institutions and their manners and customs. What charmed him most was their discipline, their industry, their honesty in public life and their studious habits. He came back richer in experience, which he sought to use in his *Sadhanasram* established in February 1892.

A poet, a writer of repute, a journalist, a zealous reformer and a patriotic worshipper of freedom, Sivanath Sastri died on 30 September 1919.

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KALI CHARAN BANERJEE

Scholar, orator and patriot, Kali Charan Banerjee, son of Hara Chandra Banerjee of Hooghly, was born at Jabbalpure on 9 February 1847. Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab was his nephew.

First Class first in M.A. Philosophy, he also passed the B.L. Examination of the Calcutta University with great credit. It was, however, not as a professor at the General Assembly's Institution, nor as an advocate of the Calcutta High Court, that he attained eminence in society. His eminence rested on the patriotic role he played in the public life of the country. A member of the Bengal Legislative Council, a Senator and the first Indian Registrar of the Calcutta University, Kali Charan was universally held in high esteem for his sincere endeavours to further the interests of his countrymen. Though he embraced Christianity in 1863 and was subsequently ordained a Minister of the Episcopal Church, he was all his life an inspiring example of tolerance to his countrymen.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Appreciating the need for a political forum for the middle classes of Bengal, he eagerly cooperated with the Ghosh brothers, Shishir Kumar, Hemanta Kumar and Moti Lal, in founding the Indian League on 25 September 1875. He was a member of the League's Executive Committee. Subsequently, he was elected President of the Indian Association which had, within a short time of its establishment in July 1876, overshadowed the League in political importance. He was, however, at the beginning opposed to the formation of the Indian Association on the ground that it would merely duplicate the work of the League.

With the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, Kali Charan became one of its most ardent supporters. He

firmly believed that the Congress alone could deliver the goods for Indians, and thus, he became an unwavering promoter of its aims. At the Poona Congress of 1895, he introduced a resolution on the Civil Service question, pressing the oft-repeated demand for the removal of all handicaps to facilitate the larger admission of Indians into the Service.

He also played a very prominent role in the deliberations of the Calcutta Congress of 1896. It was here that he proposed by a resolution that the Universities of India should not merely be examining institutions, but also centres of higher teaching and research. Incidentally, it was Sir Asutosh Mukherjee who, during his tenure of office as Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University from 1906 to 1914, gave a concrete form to the resolution of Kali Charan. Kali Charan presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca in 1898. He also took part in the deliberations of the momentous Calcutta Congress of 1906.

OTHER PATRIOTIC ACTIVITIES

As a member of the Indian Association as well as of the Congress, Kali Charan supported every concerted endeavour of his compatriots to promote the indigenous industries.

Like Peary Charan Sircar, Kali Charan also boldly fought to stem the spread of intemperance in Bengal.

A renowned orator, a public figure with broad sympathies and a dedicated educationist, the Rev. Kali Charan Banerjee passed away in Calcutta on 6 February 1907.

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NABIN CHANDRA SEN

One of the greatest sons of renascent Bengal, Nabin Chandra Sen was born at Noapara in Chittagong on 10 February 1847. His father, Gopimohan, was a peshkar in the Judge's Court.

Nabin Chandra passed the Entrance Examination from the Chittagong School in 1863, the F.A. Examination from Presidency College in 1865, and the B.A. Examination from the General

Assembly's Institution in 1868. While staying in Calcutta for his studies, he was unstintedly helped by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, the *Naranarayan* (God among men) in society.

After graduation he worked for a month at Hare School as third teacher. Then, he joined the Subordinate Executive Service by passing a competitive examination and was posted at Jessore as Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector on 3 July 1868. His official career was chequered. As the Character Book of the Subordinate Executive Service (Part IV) reveals, he started as "a promising young officer", but from 1875 his European superiors began to condemn him as "conceited and obstinate". In 1877, he was recommended for degradation to the bottom of the sixth grade because of an alleged act of disloyalty. Though treated as a disloyal servant by some, yet in the eyes of many European officials he was a distinguished poet and man of letters, always taking a keen interest in public affairs. He was denied promotion in 1900 for some passages in his *Palashir Yuddha* which were considered objectionable by the Government. He retired on 1 July 1904.

A PATRIOTIC POET

Like his preceptor Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya, Nabin Chandra developed an abiding love for his country from his college days. This love became deeper as a result of his intimacy with Shishir Kumar Ghosh at Jessore. It was Shishir Kumar who is said to have inspired him to compose his famous historical poem, *Palashir Yuddha* in April 1875. Breathing patriotism, this great poem bewitched his countrymen, both the young and the old, by the vigour and exalting influence of its nationalistic sentiments. The inspiring speech of Mohanlal, the patriotic general of Sirajuddaula, asking his soldiers not to run away from the battlefield because defeat would lead to the forging of the same fetters of slavery round the feet of both Hindus and Muslims, struck a deeper chord in the hearts of his countrymen. He wanted his soldiers to realize that a freeman in hell was immensely happier than a prosperous but enslaved ruler in heaven. When, however, his hope of defending freedom was shattered by the treachery of Mir Jafar, he lamented that this was the beginning of slavery not merely for Bengal but for the whole of India.

This poem, prescribed for study in schools on three occasions since its publication, was suddenly considered objectionable in parts by the Central Text-Book Committee on 9 September 1899. These

objectionable stanzas were directed to be expunged from all future editions of the poem. But a worse fate was in store for him. In March 1900, he was passed over by Government for promotion to the first grade in the Subordinate Executive Service. Though he was first told that the selection for promotion was made on "special merit", he soon came to know from F. A. Slack's letter of 20 September 1900, as well as from the humiliating interview he had with Woodburn, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, that he was superseded because of the unhappy episode concerning his work, *Palasir Yuddha* (The Battle of Plassey). With only four years left for his retirement from service, he was asked by Mr. Anderson from England not to take his official rebuffs too seriously to heart. Anderson assured him that he would be ever remembered not as a Deputy Collector but as the author of *Palasir Yuddha*. This quondam official of Bengal further prophesied: "Bankim Babu will be remembered long after the civil list of his time has been eaten by white ants.... I often wish that you would quit official work and give yourself up to literature—literature without any Collector in it—literature like your '*Palasir Yuddha*'."

The restless patriot in Nabin Chandra could never tolerate foreign servitude. This feeling was expressed clearly in more than one poem. In *Sab-Sadhan*, he urged his countrymen to be brave enough to offer their blood in a spirit of dedication to appease the Mother. What was needed of them was a spirit of sacrifice without which there could be no revival of the motherland's strength. Since knowledge had already made them sensitive to the pain of servitude, as he expressed in his *Sayan Chinta*, there was no meaning in their crying at the feet of foreigners for the redress of their grievances. He, thus, emphasized in his *Amar Sangeet* that they must develop the martial spirit that characterized the Sikhs at the battle of Chilianwala on 13 January 1849. No martial song could help the revival of this spirit among the people if they chose to remain effeminate and lifeless. Giving vent to the feelings of his countrymen against foreign oppression in his *Rangamati*, he urged them to be conscious of the glory of freedom.

Nabin Chandra was also an ardent votary of nationalism. In his trilogy, composed of *Raibatak*, *Kurukshetra* and *Pravash*, he visualized a unified India built on the foundations of equality, selfless devotion to duty, social cohesion and mutual love. Through the delineation of the character of Sri Krishna in this trilogy, which

was characterized by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya as the Mahabharata of modern India, Nabin Chandra placed new ideals before his countrymen for their social and political regeneration.

CRITIC OF THE ADMINISTRATION

He was bold enough to express in his *Mumoorshu Shajjay Janaika Bangali Jubak* the fear and jealousy of the European officials against the educated Bengali youths, who had become an eyesore to them by entering the Covenanted Civil Service. He attributed this fear, which prompted Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to take measures to restrict the spread of higher education among the people, to two reasons: first, Indians might ask for freedom after going through the process of intellectual awakening; and, secondly, educated Indians would expose the misdeeds of European officials through the columns of their newspapers.

As a matter of fact, Nabin Chandra himself never let go an opportunity to expose the misdeeds of European officials through newspapers with many of which he was in intimate touch. Kristo Das Pal, editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot', was particularly of great help to him in this matter. Kirkwood, the ill-starred Collector of Chittagong, brought a hornet's nest about his ears by introducing an oppressive road cess together with a scheme for establishing public latrines. Nabin Chandra played a big, though well-concealed, role in drawing the attention of the Government to the unpopular measures pursued with obstinacy by Kirkwood. The Board of Revenue had the road cess reduced, while over the case concerning public latrines Kirkwood, because of abusing his powers, was degraded to the position of Joint Collector and transferred by a special order of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Temple. In getting him humiliated Nabin Chandra got the full cooperation of Manomohan Ghosh, barrister, and Kristo Das Pal. It was he who secretly supplied K. D. Pal with copies of the memoranda exchanged between Kirkwood and Manomohan Ghosh over the public latrine case at Chittagong as well as of Temple's order censuring and degrading the Collector. Their publication in the 'Hindoo Patriot' in 1875 and 1876 created a sensation in official circles as well as among the public. Poor Kirkwood was ultimately driven to the Judicial Branch of the administration.

In 1877, some European tea planters in Chittagong fired upon a group of peasants who resisted their attempt to cut a dyke. Though

the Superintendent of Police was sympathetic towards the injured peasants, the Collector had them all arrested, tried on false allegations and sent to jail. Nabin Chandra again became active against this kind of racialism and had the case transferred to the Calcutta High Court through Manomohan Ghosh. When the biased Civilian Judge of the High Court seemed ill-disposed to Manomohan Ghosh, the patriotic Bengalees, including Nabin Chandra acting from behind the scene, had Mr. Woodroffe engaged to conduct the case. The Indian League raised funds to finance the case. Shishir Kumar Ghosh, Digambar Mitra, K. D. Pal and many other well-known Bengalees generously contributed. Nabin Chandra's personal effort to collect money secretly evoked great response in all quarters. Many European officials came to know that he was behind this agitation, but they could not take any action since there was no positive evidence against him. However, it created a strong official hostility, which pursued him till the last day of his official career.

Against the hauteur, arrogance and oppressive policy of European Civilians, Nabin Chandra gave full vent to his feelings in his poem, *Duke of Edinburgh*, in 1877. Owing to Government's objection, stanzas 20 to 23 had to be expunged from the original composition.

He was a born patriot with a firm belief in the immortality of the soul of India. That India would rise again was the theme of his poem, *Chinbita Subrid*.

PROMOTER OF VERNACULAR LITERATURE

It was mainly through his efforts that the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* was converted from a debating club into an institution devoted to the promotion of the vernacular language and its literature. As Vice-President of this Parishad, Nabin Chandra did his best to encourage reforms in school and college education. It was on the platform of this Parishad that he came into close contact with Rabindranath Tagore, then a burgeoning genius already on his way to overshadowing his elder contemporaries in the field of literature.

A patriotic poet, a votary of nationalism, a hater of European arrogance and racialism, and a humanist gifted with a broad vision, Nabin Chandra Sen passed away on 23 January 1909.

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ANANDA MOHAN BASU

"Saint Ananda Mohan", as W. C. Bonnerjee respectfully called him, was one of the most inspiring figures in the political and social history of Bengal in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Known for his profound scholarship, he combined in his character a natural humility with a singularly disinterested but bubbling enthusiasm for the cause of his country's social and political progress. His was a life of dedication, a life free from the taint of meanness of any kind, exercising an exalting influence both on his compeers and the younger generation.

Son of Padmalochan Basu, a well-to-do man, Ananda Mohan Basu was born at Jaisidhi in Mymensingh on 23 September 1847. He passed the Entrance Examination from the Mymensingh Zilla School in 1862 and stood ninth in order of merit. At all other subsequent examinations of the Calcutta University—F.A., B.A. and M.A., all of which he passed from the Presidency College—he always stood first. He capped his brilliant academic career in Calcutta with the Premchand Roychand Scholarship of Rs. 10,000. He was appointed Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the Presidency College, but he gave up this post and left for England in February 1870 for higher studies at the University of Cambridge, after receiving the Premchand Roychand Scholarship. Early in 1874 he passed the Mathematical Tripos Examination at Cambridge and obtained the rank of Junior Wrangler. His achievement in being the first Indian Wrangler, commented Bipin Chandra Pal, contributed to Indians' "new pride of race". He then passed the Bar-at-Law Examination with credit and returned to Calcutta in October 1874. The independent profession of a barrister at the Calcutta High Court best suited his long-cherished desire to work unhampered for the welfare of his country.

Within a few years of his return to Calcutta he became a prominent figure in the public life of the country. He was President of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*, a Fellow of the University of Calcutta and a member of its Senate, a member of the Bengal Legislative

Council in 1886 and 1895, and a member of the Hunter Education Commission of 1882.

THE NATIONAL-MINDED BRAHMO

While a student of the Presidency College, Ananda Mohan was an inmate of the mess at 33, Mussalmanpara Lane, which in those days was "the centre of social and religious revolt". In 1869, he, together with Prasanna Kumar Roy, Sreenath Datta, Rajaninath Roy and Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, was publicly initiated into Brahmoism by Keshab Chandra Sen. But Ananda Mohan was a Brahmo with a purpose. Opposed to the undemocratic practice of 'individual-worship' as well as to the marriage of Keshab Chandra Sen's minor daughter to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar in 1878, he seceded from the *Brahmo Samaj of India* and established, in cooperation with Dwaraknath Gangopadhyaya, Sivanath Sastri, Durga Mohan Das, Bijoy Krishna Goswami and many others, the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* with a view to promoting purity, unity and a sense of freedom among the Brahmos. And the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj's* new constitution drawn up by him spelt out these principles in very clear terms to prevent the growth of autocracy or individual leadership in future. This constitution clearly bore the impress of his larger vision of India, free from autocracy and growing in strength in a democratic atmosphere. Through the new constitution of the Samaj he wanted to furnish a model for the constitution of "the future National State of India". The 'Brahmo Public Opinion', edited by Bhuvan Mohan Das, became the organ of the new democratic *Brahmo Samaj*. Financed by Ananda Mohan and Durga Mohan Das, this shortlived journal was merged after two years in Surendranath Banerjea's 'Bengalee'.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Ananda Mohan was a born patriot. His deep love for his country was first expressed in an impassioned speech delivered by him, while a student at Cambridge, at the Brighton meeting in March 1873. Mr. White, M.P., another speaker at the meeting, admiringly commented that never in his life had he listened to a more eloquent description of the wrongs done to India. At another meeting of the East Indian Association in London he spoke with such force and logic on the same problem that even Professor Fawcett had to admire his eloquence and patriotism. As a matter of fact, he openly supported all societies in England, including the India Society, which tried to

further Indian interests by drawing the attention of the British public to them.

Neither money nor fame could deflect him from his self-imposed mission of serving the interests of his countrymen. Serving the British Government in India in any official capacity, however high and well-paid it might be, was repugnant to him. Even his profession at the bar came to be overshadowed by his overriding passion for work in connection with the political and social interests of his countrymen.

He completely identified himself with the culture of his country and bitterly detested the Anglicism of the English-educated. His stay in England or his remarkable career at Cambridge neither raised him to Olympian heights of superiority nor made him disdain things purely Indian. Thus the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika' of 15 October 1874 commented that when he returned to Calcutta on 12 October he was the same old unostentatious young man, "neither coated nor hatted, for he was above imitation".

However, on his return to Calcutta he was drawn into the vortex of activities directed to furthering the welfare of the country. He participated in the *Hindu Mela* of February 1875 and delivered a speech in which he passionately appealed to the students to unite and work in a patriotic spirit for the progress of the country.

In the unity and well-directed cooperative endeavour of the students Ananda Mohan saw great possibilities of constructive work for national regeneration. Influenced by the aims and ideals of the *Hindu Mela* as well as by the activities of the Poona Students' Association, which carried on a new movement of female education among the middle classes, he took the initiative in establishing the Calcutta Students' Association at the Presidency College in April 1875. Its purpose was to promote the mental, physical and spiritual welfare of the students. As President, he was, in the words of Surendranath Banerjea who also joined it, "the life and soul" of the Association. As a matter of fact, Surendranath, who at this time created a great stir among the students by speaking to them on Mazzini and Chaitanyadev, strengthened the hands of Ananda Mohan by joining the Association. Well-known people were invited to the Association to address the students on social, educational and political problems of the country. The Association succeeded in inspiring the students with an exalting spirit of dedication to the service of the nation. It inspired many young students later, including Bipin Chandra

Pal, Sundarimohan Das and Tarakisore Roy Chowdhury (the future Santdas Baba), to take the pledge under the leadership of Sivanath Sastri that they would prefer to starve and die rather than live as slaves of the British. Unconsciously, thus, the Association promoted the spirit of extremism among the students of Calcutta.

Realizing that the middle classes should have an organization to ventilate their grievances, which found no expression through the British Indian Association, he supported Shishir Kumar Ghosh in establishing the Indian League on 25 September 1875. But actually at the time of the inauguration of the League he was away in Dacca, speaking to the people about the necessity of uniting for the sake of the country. He could not stay in the League for long because of his differences with Dr. Sambhu Chandra Mookerjee and Shishir Kumar Ghosh. He left it and joined Surendranath Banerjea's Indian Association, a parallel middle-class organization, established on 26 July 1876. His all-India outlook helped Surendranath Banerjea to turn it into an organization with branches opened almost in every town and city of Upper India from Allahabad to Amritsar. Taking the shape almost of an Indian Parliament, the Association has been rightly described as the precursor of the Indian National Congress. It came into existence at a time of widespread unrest created by the deposition of the Gaekwar of Baroda, the Wahabi disturbances and the revival of Regulation III of 1818 and the retrograde educational policy of Sir George Campbell.

Ananda Mohan was Secretary of the Indian Association from 1876 to 1884, and President from 1896 to 1906. In the agitation of the Association against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the new Indian Civil Service Regulations of 1877, Ananda Mohan played a great part.

When the Sheriff of Calcutta refused to grant permission, Ananda Mohan and Surendranath Banerjea, overcoming all fear of official reaction, convened a public meeting, on behalf of the Indian Association, to protest against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. It was felt that if the meeting was not held, it might be the end of the Indian Association. At the meeting, which was held under the Presidency of Dr. K. M. Banerjea, a special committee, with Ananda Mohan as Secretary, was appointed to draw up a petition for submission to Parliament. The Committee was composed of Chandra Madhav Ghose, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Jogesh Chandra Datta, Rash Behari Ghose, Bhairab Chandra Banerjee, Probodh Chandra Mallick,

Nitto Lal Mallick, Jagannath Khanna, Dr. Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya, Nabagopal Mitra, Kalinath Mitra, the Rev. K. S. MacDonald and Ganesh Chunder Chunder.

Another meeting was held on 24 February 1879, with Nabob Mir Mahommed Ali in the Chair, which, in addition to criticizing the levy of income-tax even on an income below Rs. 300 per annum, vehemently protested both against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 and the Civil Service Regulations of 1877. In organizing this meeting both Ananda Mohan and Bhairab Chandra Banerjee took the leading part. It was decided at this meeting to send Lal Mohan Ghosh to England with the petition for Parliament.

That Indians were gradually waking up to the injustice of British rule under the influence of such an organization as the Indian Association was clearly seen when there was a first real political demonstration all over Bengal and elsewhere against Surendranath Banerjea's simple imprisonment for two months on a charge of contempt of court in 1883. In the Indian Association's Report for 1883 Ananda Mohan welcomed this imprisonment of Surendranath Banerjea as a "real blessing in disguise". He observed: "It has now been demonstrated by the universal outburst of grief and indignation, which the event called forth, that the people of the different provinces have learnt to feel for one another, and that a common bond of unity and fellow-feeling is rapidly being established among them".

The sequence of this new national consciousness was the first National Conference, which was held in Calcutta from 28 to 30 December in 1883. The Conference was attended by delegates from all over India. Ananda Mohan, in his opening speech, described the Conference as "the first stage towards a National Parliament". It put forth demands relating to the reform and expansion of the Legislative Councils as instruments of democratic self-government, the promotion of general and technical education, the separation of the judiciary from the executive and the larger employment of Indians in the administration of the country.

The establishment and growth of the Indian National Congress since 1885 was a heartening sign for Ananda Mohan Basu. He was all along its patron. At the 12th session of the Congress in Calcutta he protested against the increasing discrepancy of salary between the Indian and European members of the Educational Service since 1880. The gradual lowering of salaries for Indian educationists was condemned by him.

He was elected President of the Congress at its 14th session in Madras. The honour thus conferred on him was "a lasting testimony to his burning passion for national freedom". It is said that the soul-stirring appeal made by him for national unity and religious upliftment moved his audience to tears. His presidential speech, according to Surendranath Banerjea, was a masterly performance, "one of the greatest orations ever heard from a Congress platform". Afraid of nothing, he boldly criticized the Government's policy of repression and demanded a truly beneficial educational policy for the country. At the Lahore session in 1900, he was elected a member of the Education Committee of the Congress.

Ananda Mohan was also associated with the Bengal Provincial Conference. He presided over its Berhampore session in 1895.

His last patriotic act, performed at a time when he was almost in his death-bed, was to attend the *Rakhi-bandhan* ceremony at the Federation Hall on 16 October 1905, the day the Partition of Bengal came into effect. It was also on the same day that the foundation-stone of the Federation Hall was laid. Though seriously ill, he attended the function and his patriotic speech was read out by Surendranath Banerjea. The speech, which was a full-blooded denunciation of the Partition, was "the song of the dying swan". He prayed for the unification of partitioned Bengal by exhorting the youth to join a new Order, "the Order of the Motherland". He asked them to come forward with unstained characters not only to serve their motherland but also to suffer for it. This speech, in which mind and spirit triumphed over matter, was, according to Bipin Chandra Pal, a standing monument to Ananda Mohan's patriotism and piety.

PROMOTER OF MENTAL AWAKENING

As one of the sponsors of the *Banga Mahila Vidyalaya* of 1876, which was later merged in the Bethune School, Ananda Mohan emerged as an advocate of providing liberal education to the ladies of the progressive Brahmo section.

In January 1879 he helped Sivanath Sastri to establish the City School, which was subsequently converted into a college. Surendranath Banerjea also lent a hand to make the school a success.

For the moral improvement of youths he opened, with the help of Sivanath Sastri, the "Students' Weekly Service" in the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* on 27 April 1879. His lectures at the Service helped young minds to find their true bearings in society.

Noble thought and unremitting self-exertion to attain an end beneficial to his countrymen characterized the lifelong endeavours of Ananda Mohan Basu. He passed away on 20 August 1906, just before the commencement of the 'Lal-Bal-Pal' era in the history of the Indian National Congress.

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MOTI LAL GHOSH

A fearless journalist and patriot like his brother Shishir Kumar Ghosh, Moti Lal Ghosh, son of Harinarayan Ghosh, was born on 28 October 1847 at Palua-Magura (later called Amrita Bazar) in Jessore. After passing the Entrance Examination from the Krishnagar Collegiate School, he entered the Krishnagar College. But he had to discontinue his college studies on account of the death of his father and accept the post of Headmaster of the High English School at Piljong in Khulna.

But his restless spirit soon led him to give up his job and join hands with his brothers, Shishir Kumar and Hemanta Kumar, in launching the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, a bilingual weekly, in March 1868. The career of this paper was chequered. Brought over to Calcutta in October 1871, it was put into circulation again by the Ghosh brothers in December the same year. The Ghosh brothers themselves lived for some time at Hidaram Banerjee Lane prior to settling down permanently at 2, Ananda Chatterjee Lane in Calcutta. On 21 March 1878, the paper evaded the restrictive and humiliating clauses of the Vernacular Press Act by dropping its vernacular columns and becoming overnight an entirely English weekly. On 19 February 1891 it became an English daily. Though Moti Lal assisted his brother Shishir Kumar in editing the paper, it was not until 30 March 1887 that he formally appeared before the public as its Joint Editor. In January 1911, after the death of Shishir Kumar,

Moti Lal became the sole editor of the paper, the most effective organ of nationalist opinion in Bengal at that time.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As a bold journalist, Moti Lal tried to awaken political consciousness among his countrymen by opposing and criticizing the ill-inspired actions and policies of the British Government. Enterprising and resourceful, he set an example of patriotism for his countrymen to follow by boldly defending some of their basic rights against thoughtless administrative inroads. In the defamation suit instituted against the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in June 1868 by Mr. Wright, the Sub-Divisional Officer of Jhenada whose lascivious conduct towards a woman was exposed in two articles of the paper, Moti Lal boldly refused to disclose in the court the names of the writer and the printer. The manner in which the case was decided against the *Patrika*, leading to the punishment of both the writer of the articles and the printer despite their appeal to the High Court, showed how difficult it was for Indians to bring European offenders to book under the British system of justice. Racism considerably warped this system of justice, and it revealed itself in all its ugliness when Anglo-Indians launched almost a violent agitation against the Ilbert Bill of 1883. Their agitation, which cowed Lord Ripon into submission, provoked Moti Lal into twitting them ceaselessly in the columns of the *Patrika*.

A severe critic of the administration as well as of the corrupt practices of European officials, Moti Lal thoroughly exposed the vagaries of the Postal Department in his deposition before the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India in March-April 1887. With the aid of incontrovertible facts and figures, he showed how nepotism, favouritism and bribery indulged in by European officials had not only seriously affected the efficiency of the Department but had also led to the total exclusion of Indians from all responsible posts. The exposure of the scandal, which became the subject of interpellation in Parliament by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, ultimately compelled Mr. Hogg, Director-General of Post Offices, to resign.

Moti Lal also took up the cudgels on behalf of Maharaja Pratap Singh of Kashmir, who was deposed in 1889 on the flimsy grounds of plotting against Mr. Plowden, the Resident, and extravagance. Lord Lansdowne appointed a Regency Council with Col. Nisbet at its head. But the Kashmiris sent petitions to Bradlaugh, requesting him to move Parliament in behalf of their deposed ruler. It was obvious to

all that the Government of India had deposed him as a precautionary measure against the intrigues of Russia. Moti Lal failed to understand the disinclination of the British to restore Pratap Singh to his *gadi* after they had succeeded in clamping down their control over Gilgit as well as in constructing railway lines through his territory. He pointed out that Sir John Gorst's statement in the House of Commons in June 1890 that the Kashmiris themselves did not want their old ruler was utterly false. The mounting pressure of the Indian Press led by Moti Lal ultimately forced the Government to restore Pratap Singh to his *gadi* in Kashmir.

The agitation led by Moti Lal, together with the disconcerting questions asked by Bradlaugh in the House of Commons, struck terror into the hearts of the high-handed Civilians and Political Agents. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* under Moti Lal's guidance became the scourge of high-handed and despotic officials. Neither Lytton's Vernacular Press Act of 1878 nor Lansdowne's Official Secrets Act of 1899 could curb its outspokenness against the ill-inspired policies of the Government. Sir Lepel Griffin, Political Agent for Central India, smarted under the vitriolic writings of Moti Lal in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Mr. Henvey, Sir Lepel's successor in Central India, also squirmed under the attacks of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. In July 1890, Henvey issued circulars directing all Indian Chiefs and their subjects living within the jurisdiction of the Central India Political Agency not to read or communicate with the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. It was clear to Indians that these circulars were the outcome of the British rulers' desire to conceal the defects of their administration in India. Henvey lost his sleep when Bradlaugh asked questions about these circulars in the House of Commons.

Aware of the misdeeds and vagaries of District Officers, Moti Lal strongly pleaded before the Police Commission of 1890 for separating the police from the magistracy in the interests of better administration of justice in the mofussil.

He was a tower of strength to the agitation launched against the Age of Consent Bill of 1891. This agitation led to the conversion of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* into a daily on 19 February 1891. He attended the public meeting held under the presidency of Raja Rajendra Narayan Deb at the residence of Ramanath Ghosh of Pathuriaghata. This meeting led to the appointment of a Committee, with Moti Lal as one of its members, for the purpose of drawing up a Memorial against the Bill. The Government remained unmoved

by the Memorial and put the Bill on its statute-book to the utter disgust of those who treated it as a deliberate act of interference with the Hindu religion. A bitter anti-British feeling was the only outcome of this agitation.

An advocate of the freedom of the Press, he roundly condemned Act IV (Chalmers' Sedition Law) of 1898, which, by amending sections 124A and 505, made Indian newspapers liable to severe punishment for statements "promoting enmity between classes" and "conducting to public mischief". Though the meetings organized by him against these sedition clauses of the Act proved unavailing, they, it must be admitted, conduced to the political awakening of the people of Bengal. The promulgation of this Act, which was severely criticized both by W. C. Bonnerjee and Surendranath Banerjea, was precipitated by the conviction of Lokamanya Tilak for sedition in 1897.

Lord Curzon's Indian Official Secrets Amendment Act of 1904 came in for severe criticism at the hands of Moti Lal. It sought to amend Lord Lansdowne's Indian Official Secrets Act of 1889, which was passed as a result of the publication in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of an official document relating to Gilgit affairs. When Curzon attempted, by his Amendment, to extend the provisions of the Act from "military and naval affairs" to "civil affairs", Moti Lal at once pointed out in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 29 August 1903 that it would not only put erring and oppressive officials "beyond the pale of public criticism", but also threaten both the liberty of the Press and of the individual (see also *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 6 February 1904). On 16 January 1904 this great Indian newspaper vainly appealed to Curzon to exempt Indian journalists from the operations of the Act, a privilege which journalists in England enjoyed. Curzon could have easily dropped this Amendment in the same way as he had earlier withdrawn the Telegraph Messages Bill, but as the overzealous protector of British imperial interests in India he was bent on curtailing further the freedom enjoyed by Indian journalists. And he did so at a time when the people were very much agitated over his proposal of redistributing the territories of Bengal.

In 1899, Moti Lal joined the agitation against the infamous Municipal Act, which dealt a severe blow to the cause of local self-government by officializing the Calcutta Municipality. To Moti Lal, nothing was more reprehensible than the attempt to tempt Europeans

into the Municipality by dangling before them the bait of a fee of Rs. 32 per sitting.

His fearless criticism of Lord Curzon's Convocation speeches of 1902 and 1905 reflected the increasing disgust of his patriotic-minded countrymen with the unmitigated despotism of the proudest representative of the British Crown ever sent out to India.

A STAUNCH CONGRESSMAN

One of the leading spirits of the Indian League, Moti Lal became in course of time a staunch member of the Indian National Congress. He attended the Calcutta Congress of 1886 at which the Arms Act was condemned. He took an active part in the deliberations of the Allahabad Congress of 1888 over the Civil Service question. At the Bombay Congress of 1889 Moti Lal presented a scheme for direct representation to Legislative Councils, which, unfortunately, was rejected by the majority of members. His disagreement with the moderates can be traced from this time. He joined the extremist group in the Congress in 1907.

He was a great source of strength and inspiration to the Bengal Provincial Conference at which the evils of the British administration in Bengal were discussed more boldly than at any other political forum. He played a prominent part at the Nator (June 1897), Midnapore (May 1901) and Barisal (April 1906) sessions of the Bengal Provincial Conference.

A towering figure in the anti-Partition agitation in Bengal from 1905, he passed away on 5 September 1922.

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ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT

A towering figure in the history of resurgent Bengal, Romesh Chunder Dutt, the third son of Isan Chunder Dutt, was born in Calcutta on 13 August 1848. A brilliant scholar, he passed the

24 April 1882, written on the career of the retiring Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Ashley Eden, amazed official circles by its striking note of bold criticism. After praising Sir Ashley for fighting on behalf of the oppressed ryots against the planters, for proposing to confer on the cultivators the right of occupancy and, lastly, for exempting the small traders from the operation of the Licence-tax, Romesh Chunder deplored the failure of the Lieutenant-Governor to sympathize "with the new feeling and aspirations of the people". Worse still, he had "tried to trample on them, to hold them to derision, to extinguish them". Another charge preferred against Sir Ashley was that he was too much wedded to patronage and personal rule. No man had abused patronage more than he. He liked to see people "come to him and salam him". He obliged them with posts for their children. He hated agitation for rights; he understood and rewarded supplication for favours. His hatred for representative institutions and freedom of expression led him to oppose the Calcutta Municipality and to support the Vernacular Press Act of 1878.

Outspoken in pointing out faults among the rulers as well as in promoting the right cause of his countrymen, he was always aware of the risks he ran thereby. After boldly supporting the Indian National Congress in their proposal on the necessity of separating the Executive and Judicial Services, he wrote to his brother on 24 August 1893 that the authorities, displeased as they were with him, might stop his expected promotion "to a pucca commissionership". He did not care for promotion, for he had already decided to retire after completing the period of qualifying service. Smarting under the injustice done to him, he wrote to his brother in the same letter: "The doors of the Secretariat have been kept closed to me. I have not been employed for a day in any special post, and I have seen my juniors appointed as Secretary to the Government, as Senior Secretary to the Board. . . . and in other special and highly paid appointments".

Apart from the reactionary tendency of the Government, he was also keenly conscious of the prevalence of a spirit of racism in the highest official quarters even in England. In 1903, he thus wrote to B. L. Gupta: "Considerations of race are paramount in the India Office. They shut us out, not because we are critics, but because we are natives, and their policy is rule by Englishmen". He added: "Licking the dust off their feet will not move them from this policy; unsparing criticism and persistent fighting can, and will do it. English-

men understand fighting, and they will yield to persistent fighting—not to begging”.

Subordination for him did not mean servility. In every society, Indian or European, he drew attention to himself by his independent outlook and eagerness to promote Indian interests even at the cost of his own personal prospects. While a member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1895, he caused a flutter in the official circles, as Surendranath Banerjea tells us, by his refusal to “move in the usual official groove”.

ADVOCATE OF INDIAN RIGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS

He wrote to his brother on 24 August 1893 that he intensely enjoyed serving the interests of his country. By pressing for reform for his countrymen's sake he wanted to make his power felt by the Government. As a matter of fact, he had been doing it since 1870 when he was preparing for the final Civil Service Examination in London. Dadabhai Naoroji, the presiding genius of the East India Association in London, once warned him that he might jeopardize his ultimate success by attending political meetings. But nothing could curb his zeal for defending the rights of his countrymen.

He wrote a series of letters to the 'Asiatic' in 1870, protesting against the Duke of Argyll's proposal to make the income-tax permanent in India at a time when the Government had decided to withdraw aid from higher education. To him, it was suicidal on the part of the Government to discourage the spread of English education, for it was the English-educated who had proved themselves to be the best means of a rapid extension of vernacular education. The increase in the number of vernacular schools in Bengal was mainly due to the “exertions of native gentlemen educated in English under the fostering care of the grant-in-aid system”. Besides, he felt that the cultivation of English would enrich the Bengali language and its literature.

Though he was a keen advocate of English education and of sending Indian youths to England to imbibe ideas of liberty and equality, he was averse to their slavish imitation of everything that was English. Virtues and noble institutions of the English, he felt, could be profitably studied by his countrymen in the interests of their own social, political and economic advancement.

Legal inequality between Europeans and Indians in the courts of the country was repugnant to the mind of Romesh Chunder, who, even as the Magistrate and Collector of Bankura, could not try

European criminals—a power that was enjoyed by his English subordinates.

He requested B. L. Gupta, Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, to exert himself for the removal of this anomaly. Gupta submitted a note, which was strongly supported by Sir Ashley Eden. But the Ilbert Bill, which was introduced in the Viceroy's Council to remove this anomaly, had to be modified because of strong European opposition. The modification was done in accordance with the terms of the secret Concordat reached between the Government and the European Defence Association on 22 December 1883. Sir Auckland Colvin, the Finance Minister of the Viceroy's Council, was responsible for this odious compact with Mr. Evans, the leader of the European Defence Association. The vernacular newspapers felt that Lord Ripon was misled by Sir Auckland. The terms of the Concordat were translated into the Jurisdiction Act (Act III) of January 1884, in spite of all the objections raised by Kristo Das Pal in the Council. This Act gave Indian Magistrates and Judges the power to try European offenders only on one condition: they must have a jury of which not less than half should be Europeans or Americans. The whole purpose of the Act was thwarted, in spite of all the assurances of Lord Ripon, because there were many districts where a sufficient number of Europeans and Americans could not be found to constitute a jury. The transference of a case involving a European offender from one district court to another for want of European jurors meant unbearable harassment for the Indian plaintiff. So the old injustice—the old race distinction—was kept alive much to the chagrin of Romesh Chunder. And this injustice became absolutely intolerable, because the Government refused to accede to the request of the Indian Association for the extension of the right of trial by jury to Indians as well. The *Sanjibani* of 29 December 1883, after referring to the cowardice of Lord Ripon's Government, asked Indians to form associations in every village and to take the pledge that they would not give their consent to the Bill if they were not granted the right of trial by jury, the majority of which should be Indians. The *Udbodhan* of 11 January 1884 angrily remarked: "The Anglo-Indians wear the mantle of virtue and civilization, but within they are full of animal propensities".

Romesh Chunder was a great supporter of the principle of separating the Executive Service from the Judicial. In 1893, he published an article in London, which strongly advocated this separation in the interests of individual liberty in India. The scheme

suggested by him in his article was incorporated in the Memorial on this problem submitted by Sir Richard Garth, former Chief Justice of Bengal, Mr. Herbert Reynolds, Lord Hobhouse and others to the Secretary of State for India on 1 July 1899.

Following his voluntary retirement he proceeded to England, where he succeeded in organizing a party of Englishmen sympathetic towards the rights and aspirations of Indians. His book, 'England and India: A Record of Progress during 100 years from 1785 to 1885', made a tremendous impact on English public opinion about Indian rights. In this book he pinpointed the lack of representative government in India as well as the insignificant share given to Indians in the higher offices of their country. The degree of local self-government conceded to Indians justified their right to demand more. From August 1898, he carried on a tearing campaign in England against the Calcutta Municipal Bill which offered only four representatives to the Commissioners out of a total of twelve in the Executive Committee of the Calcutta Corporation. The new Executive body hardly represented the wishes of the rate-payers. In Calcutta the constitutional agitation against the Bill was carried on under the leadership of Raja Binay Krishna Deb, while in England Romesh Chunder did all he could in cooperation with his English sympathisers. In spite of the brilliant speech of Herbert Roberts in the House of Commons in August 1899 in favour of the Indian viewpoint, which was ably supported by Henry Fowler, the Government ultimately accepted Lord Curzon's retrograde scheme. He thus wrote to Raja Binay Krishna Deb, asking him to proclaim to the whole world that Lord Curzon's measure was "a measure of confiscation of existing rights". In September 1899, twenty eight Commissioners resigned their seats in the Corporation Council as a protest against the Bill. There was a great stir in the country.

Romesh Chunder was an advocate of freedom of thought. After publishing his 'Peasantry of Bengal' in 1875, he wrote to his brother that he could not and would not "put on fetters" on his tongue, even if the publication of the book injured his prospects in the Service. What he regretted most was that in India all free thought was "strangled by red-tapism, officialism, party feeling, class interests, the tyranny of the high officials and the corresponding servility of the officers of the lower grade".

The freedom of the vernacular Press was another right to defend which Romesh Chunder strained every nerve in England. In February

1898, he described the Sedition Act (Act IV) as an attempt to gag the vernacular Press in India. On the other hand, it was annoying to see the Government turning a blind eye to the activities of the Anglo-Indian journals, which always tried to excite ill-feeling between the different classes in India. However, the Government could not be moved from its resolve to go ahead with the Sedition or Chalmers' Bill, in spite of the able pleading of Herbert Roberts in the House of Commons. It was regrettable that the Government always saw disaffection in the writings of the vernacular Press, instead of finding out whether they tried to ventilate any public grievance. It was a most unhelpful attitude, which was, as Romesh Chunder deplored at the St. Martin's Hall meeting of 20 June 1898, fundamentally antagonistic to ideas of British liberty.

As President of the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in December 1899, he asked the Government to heed the views and aspirations of the people. In his presidential speech he stressed, among other things, the need for the representation of the popular element in the Government. There should be at least one Indian member in every Provincial Executive Council and not less than three Indian members in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

That without unity Indians would not be able to make any progress in the political field was sharply focussed by Romesh Chunder in his speech delivered at an ovation meeting in Calcutta in January 1900. He said: "There are ties which are stronger than the ties of blood, and they are ties of common country, aims, and common endeavours. These are ties which bind all castes and creeds in India as one united people, and these are ties which will nerve our hands and strengthen our hearts in our future endeavours".

Romesh Chunder never tolerated any unfounded allegation about corruption against Indians in general. In 1902, when Mr. E. H. Munro and some other European witnesses levelled this charge while giving evidence before the Police Commission presided over by Sir Andrew Fraser, Romesh Chunder, as a witness, strongly countered it by stating that the subordinate police service was not representative of the Indian people. Besides, he pointed out that if members of the subordinate police service were properly recruited and adequately paid, they could be easily kept above corruption. He warned the European witnesses not to make wild charges of corruption against Indian character in general, for these only tended to widen the gulf between the European and Indian communities.

DEFENDER OF PEASANTS' RIGHTS

Romesh Chunder's zealous and untiring advocacy of the rights of the peasants earned him the title of *garib ka dost*, of which he was more proud than his C.I.E. European planters disliked him for his unfailing protection of the ryots' rights. No official exercised greater restraint upon the zaminders' oppression than Romesh Chunder.

His great book, 'The Peasantry of Bengal' (1875), which, while analysing the causes of the agrarian disturbances in Nadia and Pabna in 1873, pointed out the inadequacy of Act X of 1859 in helping the ryots to prove their right of occupancy, presented a well-argued case for the enactment of a 'Permanent Settlement' between the ryot and the zamindar (his subsequent suggestion was that it should be introduced in Northern India only). Such a settlement was necessary to put a stop to the mass of litigation that was eating into the vitals of the agricultural population. The Government inquired into the facts stated by Romesh Chunder and published a long list of illegal exactions of the zamindars. His advocacy of the rights of the ryots did not go in vain, for most of his suggestions were accepted in the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885.

Famines in India, on which he wrote a book, and agrarian problems were very effectively projected by him to the British public through the press during his stay in England from 1897.

While discussing agrarian problems in his presidential speech at the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1899, he bluntly referred to the over-assessments of lands, which sparked off a great controversy in England.

That the Government lightly treated the increasing poverty of the people was clear from their proposal of 1898 to make gold the standard currency of the Empire and to fix artificially the exchange value of silver. Spearheading the opposition of his educated countrymen to this measure, he argued, in his letter to the 'Manchester Guardian' in November 1898, that the Government, by artificially raising the value of the rupee, was confiscating twenty to thirty per cent of the national wealth composed of the investments of Indians in silver trinkets. It was all the more cruel because it touched "the poor millions of India". Agriculturists paid their rent in rupees, and, consequently, raising the value of the rupee artificially was bound to increase their rental as well as their debt to the money-lenders. Besides, it would add not only to the taxation of the country but

also to its public debt. Many Englishmen supported his views contained in the evidence he gave before the Currency Commission under Sir Henry Fowler in London on 30 November 1899. In consideration of India's trade with foreign countries which had adopted the gold standard, the Government ignored the pleading of Romesh Chunder.

DENOUNCER OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Time and again Romesh Chunder tried to prick the conscience of the British public by referring to the unfairness of making India pay for Britain's imperial wars. He criticized the wasteful 'forward policy' of Lord Lytton. He was equally critical of the British Government's policy of keeping an Indian army in South Africa in 1903 at the expense of the Indian people. That apart, the gross inequality in the pay of the Australian troops (each getting 5s. a day) and that of the Indians (each getting less than 3d. a day) threw much light on the true nature of the so-called just wars of Britain.

In his 'Famines and Land Assessments in India' he regretted the spending of the land rent taken by the Government outside the country. Thus, excessive land rent, which was the cause of much misery to Indian agriculturists, seemed to be a matter of no concern to the Government. His 'Economic History of British India', in which he deplored the 'economic drain' of India's resources, was an eloquent commentary on British imperialism. "A book like this", commented N. N. Ghose of the 'Indian Nation', "does more work than cartloads of Congress resolutions".

His most full-blooded condemnation of British imperialism came out in the 'Daily News' after he had attended the Delhi Durbar of 1903. Referring to the period between the Proclamations of 1877 and 1903, he condemned it as the period of imperialism—the age of repression and distrust at home and of wasteful wars beyond the frontiers. These wars had added to India's public debt, increased the taxes and raised the army expenditure. During this period the liberty of the Press was restricted, municipal self-government repressed and the higher offices were virtually closed to the people. This period also witnessed devastating famines. Could anyone, he asked, call this the "prosperity of India?" To Indians, the Durbar of 1903 was the high water-mark of this tide of imperialism. He regretted that there was none in England who could end this imperialism and redress the

grievances of the people by cutting down the annual drain of nearly half the revenues of India to Whitehall, by abolishing the salt-tax, by limiting the land-tax, by reducing the army expenditure, by promoting Indian industries and, lastly, by opening the Executive Councils and the higher offices to the people. To deny these reforms was to confirm the Indian impression that the Durbar was "a mockery and a delusion".

On the tariff question in India Romesh Chunder's viewpoint, as explained at a meeting at Finsbury on 25 November 1903, was very clear. He wanted protection for "the young mill industry" of India. He felt that India's prosperity would be assured if she was not forced to increase her exports of grain and raw material by preferential tariffs. She should not only export less of her food supply, but also import less of manufactured articles.

SUPPORTER OF SWADESHI

As a promoter of the national movement in India under the Congress, Romesh Chunder welcomed the rising tide of *Swadeshi* in the country. However, he did not have much faith in cottage industries. He wanted his countrymen to form joint-stock companies, erect mills and adopt the methods of combined action to face competition. But at the same time every effort must be made, said he as President of the Industrial Conference held in connection with the Benares session of the Congress in 1905, to stimulate the use of home manufactures among the vast millions of Indians. That was the only way to encourage indigenous or *swadeshi* industries. Indians should refuse to be in a state of "industrial serfdom" to other nations.

PATRIOTIC LITTERATEUR

Romesh Chunder frankly acknowledged that true literary success could be achieved by an Indian only in his own mother tongue. He wrote to his brother in 1877: "My own mother tongue must be my line, and before I die I hope to leave what will enrich the language....". And he faithfully served the Bengali language and its literature in order to revivify the national mind of India and to "restore to her sons their lost faith in her past". Under the inspiration of Bankim Chandra he wrote a few historical novels, viz., *Banga Bijeta*, *Mādhavi Kankān*, *Rāna Pratāp* and *Māharāshtra Jiban Prabhat*, with a view to enkindling admiration for India's national heroes.

His Bengali translation of the Rig Veda was a stupendous work undertaken by him to make the Bengalees aware of the greatness of their cultural heritage. Drawing inspiration from his work, the 'Bengalee' of 12 March 1887 asked the readers to reflect for a moment upon "the last passage in the last page of the last volume" of Romesh Chunder's translation, wherein the Rishis enjoined upon the priests and the worshippers to have perfect unity of views and hearts. This appeal for unity made by the Vedic Rishis had come down through the misty past to inspire modern Indians to unite under the banner of the Congress. The 'Bengalee' praised Romesh Chunder for having reminded his countrymen of ancient India's great spirit of unity. This was public service of the highest order.

His 'Lays of Ancient India', a selective English translation of the Sanskrit epics, and his 'History of Civilisation in Ancient India' (3 volumes) were written to help the formation of the nation's mind and character by encouraging people to study carefully their past history.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

He wanted his countrymen to give up the caste system, infant marriage and *zanana* seclusion. There was happiness, unity and prosperity in the Vedic society, wherein women enjoyed an honourable status and the people were not divided by castes.

In his novel, *Sansar*, he offered a strong plea for widow remarriage; in its sequel, *Samaj*, he advocated the cause of inter-caste marriage. "On principle inter-caste marriage is a duty with us," he wrote to his son-in-law, J. N. Gupta, on 10 February 1894, "because it unites the divided and enfeebled nation". And to strengthen the nation he wanted the practice of widow remarriage to be well established in Hindu society.

He supported the Age of Consent Bill on the ground that early consummation of marriage was unknown in ancient India. It crept in after the Muslim conquest and "when Hindu national life had become extinct".

An administrator, a patriotic historian and litterateur, a man of courageous convictions, an unflinching upholder of his countrymen's rights and aspirations and a fearless critic of the British Government in India, Romesh Chunder Dutt left the revived and inspired nation, when he died on 30 November 1909 in Baroda, under a heavy debt of gratitude to him.

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SURENDRANATH BANERJEA

A political leader of towering stature, Surendranath Banerjea was one of the most gifted sons of renaissance Bengal. Born in November 1848, he was given the best of education by his father, Dr. Durga Charan Banerjee, who, apart from being a reputed physician in Calcutta, was universally respected by the progressives for his liberal views. Surendranath, whose academic career was fairly distinguished, graduated from the Calcutta University and went to England in 1868, together with R. C. Dutt and B. L. Gupta, to compete in the Open Competitive Examination for the Indian Civil Service. He passed the Examination in 1869, but was disqualified on the ground of age. He, however, won his case on appeal to the judicial authorities in England and was reinstated in the list of selected candidates. He passed the Final Examination in 1871. After his return to Calcutta he was posted to Sylhet as Assistant Magistrate in November 1871.

He was an ill-starred official. For a trivial offence, which consisted in entering the name of an accused in the *Ferari* list while he was actually not an absconder, he was dismissed from the service in 1873 by the Secretary of State in Council on the report of a Three-man Commission set up to investigate into the case. It was actually racialism that sparked off the trouble. Mr. Sutherland, the District Magistrate, was racially ill-disposed towards Surendranath. As A. O. Hume, himself a Civilian, pointed out, the whole bureaucracy, including Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor, viewed with jealousy and disapproval the admission of Indians within the sacred pale of the Covenanted Civil Service.

Cold-shouldered by the India Office in London where he had gone in April 1874 for redress, he tried to become a member of the Middle Temple Bar. But the Benchers of the Middle Temple declined to call him to the Bar because of the stigma of dismissal.

What was a loss for the Covenanted Civil Service providentially proved to be a great gain for the country. Though on his return to Calcutta in 1875 he was appointed Professor of English in the Metropolitan College founded by Vidyasagar, there were some who never lost an opportunity to plead with the authorities for his readmission into the Civil Service. Thus the *Soma Prakash* of 20 November 1876 suggested that the Government should mark the auspicious occasion of the Queen's assumption of the imperial title by re-admitting Surendranath into the Indian Civil Service. The *Bharat Mihir* of 30 November 1876, however, stood foursquare against this opinion and opined that Surendranath would benefit the country more by remaining outside the Indian Civil Service. Future events proved how correct was the opinion of the *Bharat Mihir*. As the founder of the Indian Association, as one of the ardent sponsors of the National Conference and Bengal Provincial Conference and as President of the Indian National Congress in 1894 and 1902, Surendranath became one of the makers of the political destiny of India.

From 1875 to 1912 he was engaged in teaching. He taught in the Metropolitan Institution, the City College, and the Free Church College before establishing his own institution, which later became famous as Ripon College.

From 1876 to 1899 he was a member of the Calcutta Corporation, and for a long time since 1885 he was the Chairman of the North Barrackpore Municipality. For eight consecutive years from 1893 to 1901 he was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council. In February 1913 he became a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. Knighted in January 1921, he became a Minister of the Reformed Provincial Council, holding the portfolio of Local Self-Government and the Medical Department.

His moderation led to his defeat at the hands of the Swarajists in the Bengal Legislative Council elections of 1923. Ever since then he ceased to count for much in the public affairs of the country.

His keen interest in education helped him to become a member of the Senate. A patriotic journalist, having worked for some time as correspondent of the 'Hindoo Patriot', he became the owner of the 'Bengalee' in 1879.

INSPIRER OF THE STUDENTS

Surendranath held teaching to be no less important than political work. Educational work had in it "the elements of permanent utility". He felt that it was only through well-educated students, capable of appreciating their civic duties and imbued with the noble spirit of service, that the political and social progress of the country could be ensured. They must be helped to develop a sober and rational interest in public affairs. To him, however, the duty of helping students to shake off their political apathy was no less important than the duty of protecting them against extreme fanatical views.

The political ideals he placed before the students after joining Ananda Mohan Basu's Students' Association (1875) were those of Mazzini: political unity and national emancipation. He wanted young men to imbibe Mazzini's patriotism and self-abnegation to achieve the national unity and emancipation of their country. He, however, took care to ask them, in his lecture on 'The Life of Mazzini', to follow constitutional methods to achieve their aims. The adoption of revolutionary methods was deprecated by him. With the help of Jogendranath Vidyabhusan and Rajani Kanta Gupta, both facile and patriotic writers in Bengali, Surendranath succeeded in disseminating the inspiring ideals of Mazzini among the young men of Bengal. Bipin Chandra Pal informs us that through some secret societies also, of which Surendranath was a member, these ideals were tried to be spread.

The lectures of Surendranath, whose oratory held spellbound all young minds, proved to be no less tendentious in this respect. In his lecture to the students on 'The Rise of the Sikh Power in the Punjab' at the Hindu School Theatre, he for the first time analysed this rise as a movement against the Brahminical domination of the Hindu community, against the oppressive Moghuls and, lastly, against British aggression. He criticized British historians for trying to belittle Sikh military skill, and gave a rousing description of the deathless devotion of the Sikhs to their Khalsa (Commonwealth) and of their great valour against the British forces at Chilianwala and Gujarat in 1849.

His lectures on 'Indian Unity', the 'Study of History' and 'High English Education' made the students conscious of their responsibilities in society. Like Mazzini, Surendranath wanted to harness their energies to the task of emancipating the country. Thus, he advocated, in his address to the students in Madras in 1894, that they should

not only be allowed to discuss politics but also be permitted to participate in it subject to proper control and guidance. He did not join the Calcutta University Institute, because Sir Charles Elliott ruled out the discussion of politics by its student-members.

As one of the sponsors of the Sivaji festival in Bengal, Surendranath wanted his countrymen, particularly the students, to draw inspiration for national work from the life of the great Maratha hero. The Sivaji festival was celebrated in the Classic Theatre on 17 July 1903 under his presidency. The majority of that day's assembly consisted of students. He opened the meeting with a thrilling speech, which, as stated by the *Hitavadi* of 24 July 1903, elicited praise even from his enemies.

Aware of the regenerative values of education, he deplored, while addressing the 35th Hare Anniversary meeting, Sir George Campbell's move to abolish some of the colleges in Bengal. The abolition of the Delhi College was no less deplorable. He severely criticized the Government for stinting an annual expenditure of Rs. 12,000 for its maintenance, while it did not grudge to spend sixty lakhs for the Delhi Darbar and six lakhs a year for the Simla exodus. Much later his informed criticism also, together with that of others, prevented Lord Curzon from abolishing the second-grade colleges in Bengal.

The effects of the political consciousness he had awakened among the students were seen in the agitation against the Partition of Bengal in 1905.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

A hater of early marriage and an advocate of widow remarriage, Surendranath felt the need of regenerating society for safeguarding the achievements of political agitation. From 1888 Bengal Provincial Conferences were followed by social conferences wherein questions concerning the remarriage of Hindu widows, the marriageable age of Hindu girls, etc., were hotly discussed.

Surendranath's lecture on *Sri Chaitanya*, delivered at the London Missionary Society's Institution in Bhowanipore in 1875, was aimed at awakening in young minds the true spirit of liberalism. This lecture conveyed Sri Chaitanya's message of social uplift and emancipation from inhibiting customs. It emphasized Sri Chaitanya's revolt against the domination of the Brahmins and the caste system. Surendranath wanted youths to learn from Sri Chaitanya's message of social

freedom the need to do away with all caste and religious distinctions between man and man for the sake of the country's social cohesion. He pointed out that mere social equality was not enough; women also had to be released, as exhorted by Sri Chaitanya, from the bonds of enforced widowhood. This was necessary for all-round social regeneration.

An active supporter of Peary Charan Sircar's temperance movement, Surendranath launched a campaign, with the help of Krishna Kumar Mitra and Kali Sankar Sukul, against the Outstill System which, for the sake of revenue, had reduced the price of country liquor and stimulated its consumption among the lower classes of the rural population. The Government was ultimately forced to abolish the System.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLITICAL REGENERATION

Surendranath attributed his humiliation and suffering at the hands of the British authorities to the lack of a strong and compelling public opinion in India. The weakness of his countrymen lay in their disunity. The middle classes, particularly, could not get any redress of their wrongs because they had no organization to exert any collective pressure on the government. To remove this desideratum from their life as well as to make them conscious of their political interests, Surendranath, together with Ananda Mohan Basu and others, established the Indian Association on 26 July 1876. Its aims were the creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country, the unification of Indians upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations, the promotion of amity and fellow-feeling between Hindus and Muslims, and, lastly, the inclusion of the masses in the great public movements of the day.

Under the inspiring leadership of Surendranath the Indian Association set on foot a national movement to raise the maximum age-limit of the Covenanted Civil Service Examination from 19 to 22 years, as well as to persuade the authorities to hold simultaneous examinations in India and England. The lowering of the maximum age-limit in 1877 from 21 to 19 years by Lord Salisbury, the Conservative Secretary of State, was regarded as a deliberate attempt to shut out Indian candidates from the Indian Civil Service.

After holding a public meeting at the Town Hall on 24 March 1877, Lal Mohan Ghosh was deputed to England with a Memorial, which came to be universally supported in the country as a result of

Surendranath's lecture-tour of Northern, Western and Southern India. From now on, as pointed out by Sir Henry Cotton in his 'New India', Surendranath's name excited "as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Multan as in Dacca". Both Indian unity and political consciousness came to be effectively promoted throughout the country by a sense of common grievance against the British Government.

The growing political consciousness in Bengal, particularly, was seen in the establishment of political associations in its districts. The Bogra People's Association, the Mymensingh Association, the Senhati People's Association, the Bhajanghata Indian Association, the Chittagong Association and the Rajshahi Association were all smaller replicas of the Indian Association.

The agitation, however, failed to get the maximum age-limit raised to 22, though Parliament granted a doubtful concession in the form of the Statutory Civil Service in 1879. Surendranath did not relax his efforts. At the first Indian National Conference (the precursor of the Congress) of December 1883 he again raised the issue. A National Fund was created to carry on the agitation as well as to promote political work in the country. Apart from undertaking another extensive lecture-tour of India, Surendranath used the forum of the Indian National Congress to create a stronger public opinion on the issue of the Civil Service Examination. The maximum age-limit was raised in 1884, and the agitation would have reached its other objective also, when Parliament resolved on 2 June 1893 to hold simultaneous Civil Service examinations, but for the opposition of Lord Lansdowne in India.

Agitational politics, though carried on constitutionally, steadily toughened the fibre of Indian public opinion and unity. The agitation against Lytton's Vernacular Press Act and Arms Act of 1878 proved partially successful. Surendranath's Indian Association was the spear-head of the attack on the Government. A public meeting, followed by the despatch of a letter to Mr. Gladstone, "sounded the death-knell of the Vernacular Press Act". The agitation marked a definite stage in the evolution of national feeling. Lord Ripon, in deference to Indian public opinion, repealed the Vernacular Press Act. Though Government retained the Arms Act, Indian politicians, including Surendranath, never ceased to criticize it as a badge of racial inferiority deliberately imposed on the Indian body politic by the alien rulers.

By taking up the cudgels for the promotion of local self-government in Bengal Surendranath was able on his own, as well as through the Indian Association, to generate great enthusiasm for political progress in the mofussil. Government's acceptance of the elective principle in the constitution of local municipal bodies in 1881 was a great victory for Surendranath. On the other hand, the repressive policy of the Government also steeled the resolution of the people to achieve further political progress.

The tearing campaign carried on in Bengal against the Municipal Act of 1899, a reactionary measure first fashioned by Mackenzie and then by Lord Curzon, added a sharper edge to the hostility of the people to the callous Government. Surendranath and Raja Binay Krishna Deb in Calcutta were ably supported in their opposition to the Act by R. C. Dutt who worked hard, though in vain, in London to get it withdrawn. With the officialization of the Calcutta Corporation twenty-eight Commissioners resigned. Surendranath, who had the Act superseded in 1923, remained outside the Corporation since 1 September 1899.

For the introduction of the elective principle in the Provincial Legislative Councils, or in other words for representative government, Surendranath stirred up the enthusiasm of his countrymen throughout India. On 24 December 1884 the Indian Association presented an address, drafted by Surendranath, to Lord Dufferin, pointing out that there was no room for the expression of popular opinion in the Councils. Non-official members, all nominated, had no right of interpellation, nor did they have any share in financial management. The constitutional agitation set on foot was carried on by Surendranath through the forum of the Congress. He had the problem discussed at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1886. In 1890 he was deputed to England, together with Hume, Pherozeshah Mehta, Monomohan Ghosh, W. C. Bonnerjee, Sharifuddin, Eardley Norton and R. N. Mudholkar, to plead for the cause of representative government in India. His oratory and irrefutable arguments made a favourable impression upon the public in England. In his famous speech at the Oxford Union he tore to shreds the English sense of superiority by stating that the ancestors of the Indians had self-governing institutions and a highly developed system of ethics when the forefathers of the most enlightened European nations "were roaming in their native woods". He added: "When we ask for representative institutions, we ask for something which is in entire

accord with the genius and the temper of the people of India, in entire accord with the traditions of their history....".

In the reformed and enlarged Councils of 1892 the elective principle was indirectly conceded. It was, however, treated as a stage in the evolution of representative Councils in the country. The enthusiasm for the cause was what mattered most, and it was heartening to see this enthusiasm steadily assuming national proportions.

The desire for political progress was intensified in Bengal by the inauguration of Provincial Conferences from 1888. At these conferences problems of provincial interest, such as education, sanitation, local-self-government, etc., were discussed. The free expression of opinions here helped the growth of political consciousness. From 1895 Provincial Conferences were held in the district towns also. It brought the elite of Calcutta in close contact with district people and helped the growth of provincial unity.

Another problem which became the focal-point of public attention in India as a result of Surendranath's endeavour was the exclusion of Indians from the higher offices in the minor Civil Services, such as the Police, the Customs, the State Railways, the Opium, the Public Works, the Survey, the Education and other Departments. He had this issue discussed seriously at the Madras and Amraoti Sessions of the Congress in 1894 and 1897 respectively. While deposing before the Welby Commission in London in 1897, he strongly condemned this policy of exclusion.

THE HERO OF BENGAL

Surendranath was the first Indian of his generation to suffer imprisonment in the discharge of a public duty. This made him a hero in Bengal long before he was lionized in the other provinces of India. His leaderette in the 'Bengalee' of 2 April 1883, criticizing Mr. Justice Norris of the Calcutta High Court for trifling with the religious feelings of the Hindus landed him in trouble. His criticism was based on wrong information. He was tried before a Full Bench and sentenced to two months' imprisonment in May 1883. The sentence stirred up the wrath of the students, who held a demonstration and smashed windows and threw stones at the police. Asutosh Mukherjee, the future High Court Judge and Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, was among the rowdy youths. Indians closed their shops in protest and mass meetings were held everywhere.

Public meetings in sympathy were held in Lahore, Amritsar, Agra, Fyzabad, Poona and many other towns. This incident helped to create a new bond of friendship and sympathy between the different Indian provinces. Besides, its occurrence at a time when the Ilbert Bill had much strained the relations between Indians and Europeans tended to sharpen their mutual hostility. The situation, however, proved very favourable to the growth of patriotism and national feeling in the country. And the necessary sequence of this occurrence was, as Bepin Chandra Pal points out, the first National Conference of 1883.

Though a moderate, Surendranath was a tower of strength to the agitation launched against the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Together with national feeling, self-reliance and the spirit of public service came to be promoted among his countrymen through his policy of constitutional agitation. His whole life was a commentary on the usefulness of organization, without which his countrymen could not have made any political progress worth the name. He passed away on 6 August 1925.

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JYOTIRINDRANATH TAGORE

A dramatist, poet, musician, artist, business entrepreneur, phrenologist and, above all, a patriotic nationalist, Jyotirindranath Tagore was a versatile genius, who may be said to have been the forerunner of the greater genius in the same family, viz., Rabindranath Tagore. The inspiration that Rabindranath received from his elder brother, Jyotirindranath, has been openly acknowledged by him in his memoir, *Jiban Smriti*.

The fifth son of Debendranath Tagore, Jyotirindranath was born at Jorasanko on 4 May 1849. The application of coercion at home to make him studious made him develop an aversion for routine studies. He read in St. Paul's School, Montague's Academy and the Hindu School before passing the Entrance Examination from Keshab Chandra Sen's Calcutta College (later known as Albert College) in 1864. The F.A. course of study at the Presidency College had very little interest for him. Absorbed in organizing the Jorasanko Theatre, a family hobby, Jyotirindranath did not sit for the F.A. Examination. In 1867, he went to Ahmedabad where, under the care and encouragement of his Civilian brother, Satyendranath, he learnt French, drawing and sitar playing.

After his return to Calcutta he became the Secretary of the *Adi Brahmo Samaj* and worked in that capacity from April 1869 to August 1888.

He learnt the Marathi language while he stayed with Satyendranath at Satara from 1894 to 1897, and later on translated into Bengali Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*. His knowledge of French enabled him to render into Bengali some entertaining French farces. His drawings elicited praise even from Rothenstein in England. He not only composed songs but also set them to music. His literary works won him a high place in the learned society of his time in Bengal.

A PATRIOTIC NATIONALIST

It is as a patriotic nationalist that Jyotirindranath is remembered in the history of renascent Bengal. His national song entitled *Udbodhan*, opening with the line 'Awake, awake, the children of India! How long will you all remain asleep forgetting your Mother?' (freely rendered into English), which was sung by Hemendranath Tagore at the second session of the *Hindu Mela* on 11 April 1868, caused a great stir among the audience. The song projected a tragic image of Mother India, emaciated, drained of her life-blood by foreign subjugation and mass ignorance, and dismembered by self-interest and internal disunity. He thus asked his countrymen to awaken from their slumber and to recall the past glory of India.

Influenced by the spirit of the *Hindu Mela* of which he was the Joint Secretary for one year from 1874 to 1875, Jyotirindranath wrote plays to promote a feeling of nationalism among his countrymen. His *Puru-bikram* (1874), first staged before the *Biddojjan Samagam*

(Gathering of the Learned) at Jorasanko, was a great success. Puru's call to his people, urging them to rise up and to unite to drive out 'Yavanas' who had entered their 'house' to wrest from them their freedom, found an echo in the hearts of the audience, including such well-known personalities as the Rev. K. M. Banerjea, Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, Rajnarayan Basu and Peary Charan Sircar. Through Puru, who called upon his people to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the freedom of their motherland, Jyotirindranath placed the highest national ideal before his countrymen to follow. His *Sarojini* (1875), *Asrumati* (1879) and *Swapnamayi* (1882), all staged at the Great National Theatre, did not fail to stir the patriotic feelings of his countrymen. His Bengali rendering of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Gita Rahasya* was aimed at promoting the same end.

In his irrepressible zeal for promoting the cause of the motherland, Jyotirindranath took the initiative in establishing about 1877 what may be considered as the first secret society in Bengal. It was established at a time when Jogendranath Vidyabhusan was propagating the ideals of Mazzini at the request of Surendranath Banerjea. Publicly known as the *Sanjibani Sabha*, it was referred to by its select members by a code name, *Humchupamuhuf*. The proceedings of the Sabha were written in a code language. Members, initiated into the Sabha by a special Vedic ritual, pledged themselves to secrecy. On the president's table there were two human skulls, in the eye-sockets of which burned candles. The skulls represented dead India, the candles, revivification and enlightenment.

Housed in a dilapidated building at Thuntunea, the Sabha's president was Rajnarayan Basu. Among its members were Rabindranath Tagore, Nabagopal Mitra and a few other enthusiastic souls. Every member had to pay one-tenth of his income as subscription. The linchpin of the Sabha was Jyotirindranath himself. To promote national feeling members decided not to observe any caste distinction. Jyotirindranath fashioned a new national dress and headgear, which, unfortunately, he alone wore. The members then experimented with a national match factory, both of which failed owing to their inexperience. They also tried to encourage the spread of such manly sports as rifle-shooting and hunting. As usual, their inexperience stood in the way of the progress of their plans. Nevertheless, they set worthy *Swadeshi* ideals for their countrymen to follow.

THE PATRIOTIC ENTREPRENEUR

No failure could damp the zeal of Jyotirindranath for undertaking fresh business enterprises with a view to inspiring his countrymen to follow in his footsteps. When his jute business failed, he took to indigo cultivation. The discovery of aniline dyes by a German scientist forced him to abandon indigo cultivation, but not before he had made a handsome profit. He invested these earnings in his steamer service company, which was opened in 1884 with just one steamer named *Sarojini*. It plied between Khulna and Barisal. Because of his initial success, he purchased four more steamers for the same route. But the English-managed Flotilla Company, which also had its steamers plying along the same route, reduced its fares to add to the financial strain suffered by Jyotirindranath as a result of the loss of one steamer named *Swadeshi*. Though the people of Khulna and Barisal patronized his steamers in a patriotic spirit, he was ultimately compelled to sell them to the Flotilla Company.

SOCIAL REFORMER

It was under the influence of Satyendranath Tagore that Jyotirindranath became a convert to the cause of female emancipation. He regretted having written the farce, *Kinchit Jalayog*, in which he had ridiculed Keshab Chandra Sen's advocacy of female progress. He gave his wife the best possible education at home and taught her horse-riding in the Calcutta Maidan, without caring for social obloquy. His aversion for polygamy was expressed as early as 1867, when he and his brothers staged Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's *Nava Natak* at the Jorasanko Theatre. This drama pilloried the *kulins* of Bengal for clinging to polygamy shamelessly.

He wanted the abolition of the caste system and the introduction of a democratic spirit in society. As long as the upper classes did not give up their domination over the lower classes, it was meaningless, he said, to ask the English to leave India. He feared that if Indians obtained independence without abolishing this system of domination from their midst, the upper classes would become more bureaucratic and autocratic than the English. He felt that the country needed another Chaitanyadev to destroy this form of domination innate in the caste system.

He advocated the development of a new culture in India which would combine the best of her past with the best of modern Europe. And liberalism, to be sure, was to be its toughest fibre.

PROMOTER OF THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGE

Through his shortlived journal, *Bharati*, and his equally short-lived literary association called the *Saraswat Samaj*, Jyotirindranath tried his best, in cooperation with others, to promote the cause of the vernacular language and its literature. His own literary output constitutes no small contribution to the promotion of the same end. His intimate association with the *Bangiya Sabitya Parishad* as its Vice-President from 1902 to 1903 was also fruitful.

A national-minded patriot, Jyotirindranath Tagore passed away at Ranchi on 4 March 1925.

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INDRANATH BANDYOPADHYAYA

Son of Bamacharan Bandyopadhyaya, Indranath Bandyopadhyaya was born in May 1849 in his maternal uncle's house at Pandugram in the district of Burdwan. He read in many institutions, including the Presidency College, before graduating from the Cathedral Mission College in 1869. He took the B.L. Degree in 1871.

He started life as headmaster of the Hetampur School, but chose to enrol himself as an advocate in the Calcutta High Court in 1871. Subsequently, he transferred his practice to Purnea from where he joined the Judicial Service as Munsiff. He soon resigned out of disgust and returned to the Calcutta High Court. But towards the end of 1881 he left for Burdwan, which remained till the last day of his life the main centre of his activities.

A SATIRIST

It is as a satirist that Indranath has left his mark on the history of renaissance Bengal. There was a racy flavour about his pungent satires, which were mainly directed at making the English-educated Bengalees conscious of the drawbacks of their character and way of life. Their Anglicization, combined with habits of drinking,

fawning upon European officials, aping European manners and ceaseless jabbering about the welfare of the people, was the seamy side of Young Bengal that was held up to ridicule by Indranath in his side-splitting satires. Hard punches were delivered by him not only on those who drank and used the English language in the name of progress and culture and wanted Mother India to dance with a gown on, but also on those who thought of liberating the motherland by haranguing from public platforms and indulging in carping criticism without, however, abandoning their ill-concealed craving for British favours and honours. As shown in his *Bharat Uddhar*, the very approach of the Bengalees to such a stupendous problem as achieving freedom for the motherland was impractical and ridiculous. They were found wanting not only in martial spirit but also in common sense. He ridiculed his countrymen who, while denying freedom to their own womenfolk, thought of snatching freedom for the country from the well-armed British without shedding blood.

Bankim Chandra rightly described Indranath as Halley's Comet in the firmament of Bengali life and literature. His appearance was necessary to make the Bengalees aware of the dark side of their life. Endearingly called "Bengal's Indranath", he shone in the firmament of Bengali literature under his pseudonyms, *Panchu-Thakur* and *Panchananda*. The satirical monthly, *Panchananda*, was enriched by his contributions before its merger in the *Bangavasi*. He passed away on 23 March 1911.

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RAJANI KANTA GUPTA

Rajani Kanta Gupta has left his mark in the history of renaissance Bengal as a patriotic historian and litterateur.

The youngest son of Kamala Kanta Gupta, an *ayurvedic* practitioner, Rajani Kanta was born on 13 September 1849 at Matta in the Manikgunj subdivision of Dacca. A serious illness in his boyhood so undermined his constitution and handicapped him physically that he could not prosecute his studies beyond the Entrance Class at the Sanskrit Collegiate School in Calcutta.

Disliking both his father's profession and Government service, he chose to live by writing. Endowed with an iron will and an analytical mind, he steadily moved on from a shaky start to a position commanding respect in the field of Bengali literature. The University of Calcutta appointed him Head Examiner in Bengali Composition for the F.A. and B.A. Examinations. Another institution with which he became intimately associated was the *Bangiya Sabitya Parishad*. He was the first editor of its *Patrika* (journal) from 1894 to 1896. The livewire of the Parishad, his advice was eagerly sought on every matter by Romesh Chunder Dutt, its President, and Raja Binay Krishna Deb, its chief patron.

PATRIOTIC PROMOTER OF THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGE

Rajani Kanta was a patriotic promoter of the Bengali language and its literature. The lucidity of his style showed that he found no thought too difficult to express in Bengali. His biographical sketches—*Jaidev Charit*, which won him a handsome cash prize from Saurindra Mohan Tagore in 1873, *Charit Mala*, *Naba Charit*, *Pratibhar Parichay*, *Bir Mahima*, *Bhisma Charit*—and his famous *Sipahi Yuddher Itihas* (History of the Sepoy Mutiny) in five volumes constituted a positive contribution to the growing historical literature of Bengal. His monumental work on the Sepoy Mutiny demonstrably proved that history could be given a distinct literary flavour even if written in Bengali.

It was on his proposal that a *Paribhāsa Samiti* was set up by the *Bangiya Sabitya Parishad* under the presidency of Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya to find out suitable words and terms in Bengali for facilitating the teaching of geography, mathematics and science in the vernacular. Rabindranath Tagore was a member of this committee. It was also on his proposal that the Parishad set up a special committee to impress upon the Calcutta University the need to introduce the study of the Bengali language and its literature in the F.A. and B.A. courses. Despite the strong support given by Romesh Chunder Dutt and Rabindranath Tagore to the endeavour of this committee, it only succeeded in making the University introduce 'Bengali Composition' in the F.A. and B.A. courses. The result, however, was not discouraging, because it was the thin end of the wedge promising wider acceptance of the study of the Bengali language and its literature by the University at every stage in the system of education under its control.

A PATRIOTIC NATIONALIST

A staunch patriot, Rajani Kanta bent all his literary efforts to awakening in his countrymen the much-needed sense of nationalism. His stupendous work on the history of the Sepoy Mutiny, to complete which he took twenty years (1879-1900), was an attempt not only at narrating the whole episode in Bengali but also at bringing out in clear relief the patriotic spirit of Kumar Singh, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and Nana Sahib. In spite of the veiled warning administered to him by the Government, he persisted in the labour of writing the history of the Mutiny in the light of the new material that he had collected, spurred on by his patriotic love for the truth and for his country. His work clearly bore the impress of his spirit of nationalism, just as the earlier works of English historians on the same subject represented their national viewpoints. It is interesting to note that Bengali publishers were afraid, in view of the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, to undertake the publication of the third volume (dealing with the Oudh question) of his monumental work for its anti-British bias. Needless to say, this work of his was a source of great inspiration to the revolutionaries of Bengal from 1905.

His short biographies in *Naba Charit*, *Pratibhar Parichay* and *Charit Mala* tried to promote the same purpose of arousing his countrymen's spirit of patriotism by placing before them such exemplary characters as David Hare, Ram Kamal Sen, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Akshay Kumar Datta, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, etc. In his *Arya Kirti* he made a conscious attempt to draw the attention of young boys and girls to the spirit of sacrifice and of service of Rajput, Mahratta, Sikh and Bengali heroes of the past. He wrote that he would deem his efforts well requited if this work of his could awaken in the youths a sense of nationalism, a sense of identification with the sorrows of their motherland as well as with the achievements of the Indian patriots of the past. There was thus no need for them to read the achievements of foreign patriots in a foreign language.

AWARENESS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

By reading books on foreign countries students became attracted towards them. The greatness of their own cultural heritage remained unknown to them. Rajani Kanta thus emphasized in his *Arya Kirti* the necessity of making the youths read books, which would stir their national consciousness by acquainting them with the greatness

of their cultural heritage. Their reasonable pride in the superiority of their culture was bound to prop up and fortify their sense of nationalism, a desideratum in the life of the country. This advocacy brought him into line with the ideas of Rajnarayan Basu, Romesh Chunder Dutt and many other well-known thinkers of Bengal in the nineteenth century.

Like Rajnarayan Basu, he gave an aggressive slant to his advocacy of the cause of promoting national feeling among his countrymen. His pamphlet entitled *Amader Jatiya Bhab* (Our National Feeling) made this abundantly clear. He pointed out that his countrymen had forgotten their identity, because of their increasing eagerness to imitate the British in their dress, manners and customs. It was all the more regrettable that they took an immense pride in speaking in English at public meetings held to discuss national problems. What was ludicrous was their shameless effort to use English words even while speaking to each other in Bengali. Their dependence on a foreign tongue, on foreign dress and manners, had destroyed in them the spirit of self-reliance, which once characterized the life of the Bengalees before the advent of the British. Neither Pathan rule nor Moghul rule could destroy the individuality of Bengali thought, which found expression in the works of Chandidas, Govindadas, Mukundaram, Ghanaram, Bharatchandra and the savants of Nabadwip. Under the Pathan and Moghul rulers Bengal's indigenous industries, like the muslin industry of Dacca, flourished, testifying to the Bengali spirit of self-reliance.

Their loss of self-respect and self-reliance was clearly brought out by their dependence on Manchester textiles and Sheffield cutlery. Imitation choked the springs of fresh and invigorating thought in them. Disunity in everything, even in dress, did not allow them to have the necessary national feeling. He ridiculed those who, after returning from England, wore English dress and talked of unity, equality and freedom in the English language. He pertinently asked his countrymen whether it would have been possible for Mazzini and Garibaldi to lead Italians to regeneration and freedom if they had appeared before them in foreign dress and spoken to them in a foreign tongue.

Bengalees, he felt, could recover their lost national feeling if they spoke and wrote in their own tongue, without depending on English words. Like one's mother, the mother tongue should also be equally revered. A mother reared up her children to manhood, while

the mother tongue led the people to manliness, self-reliance and self-respect. This was the reason why he wanted Bengali to be taught seriously in the University.

Rajani Kanta was also a champion of the cause of a free vernacular Press. His small work, *Deshiya Mudra Jantra Vishayak Prastava* (Short Essay on the Vernacular Press), published under the auspices of the Indian Association after the passing of Act IX of 1878, was a very sober and informative study on the history of the Newspaper Press in India. Apart from showing the advantages of a free Press in the country, the work contained a convincing discussion on the injurious consequences likely to result from Act IX of 1878. It was only a free vernacular Press, he felt, that could keep the Government informed of the legitimate grievances of the people and lead to better administration.

A true patriot, a historian imbued with a high sense of nationalism and an advocate of the freedom of the Press, Rajani Kanta Gupta bequeathed the noble mission of his life to many ardent youths of Bengal, including Ramendra Sundar Trivedi. He died on 13 June 1900.

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RAJKRISHNA ROY

Rajkrishna Roy was born of very humble parents at Ramchandrapur in Burdwan on 21 October 1849. He lost his father at the age of 8. This calamity hampered his schooling at the Free Church Institution in Calcutta and forced him to go out in search of some means of livelihood. He found a humble lodgement in the New Bengal Press, from where he moved on, after gaining some experience, to the Albert Press as Manager. Subsequently, he established his own press, called the Bina Press, from where he published his monthly journal, *Bina*, in addition to some of his poems and dramas. When the press put him to pecuniary trouble, he disposed it off and took

to staging dramas and comic operas in his own theatre known as the 'Bina Theatre'. This new enterprise of his made him incur such heavy debts that he was forced to close it down and work as a hired playwright of the 'Star Theatre'.

A prolific writer, Rajkrishna was held in high esteem in the literary circle of Calcutta. But in spite of his high literary standing, he could never shake off poverty, which ultimately hastened his death.

A PATRIOTIC POET

Whatever be the weight of his literary contributions, there is no gainsaying the fact that he was a patriot who succeeded in stirring the conscience of his countrymen by some of his satirical poems. In his poem, *Bhutale Bangalee Adham Jati* (Bengalees, the vilest race on earth), he boldly held up before his countrymen the causes of their degradation. Their excessive indulgence in idleness and gossip, coupled with their abject adulation of the British, was a sign of a life of slavery. They had neither any sense of unity nor any love for freedom. When one of them was insulted by any foreigner, the others stood aside and laughed. They were fond of imitating European dress, manners and customs, without, however, realizing that this imitation never helped them to rise in the estimation of the foreigners. Thus, it was the patriotic duty of his countrymen to abandon the habits of idleness and imitation if they wanted to be useful to their motherland. All this apart, he emphasized, they must take to business, as the people of Bombay were steadily doing. It would be a matter of shame if, with all their education, they did not enterprisingly enter the field of trade and commerce.

Apart from expressing the same feelings in his poem, *Saradiya Jalakbanda*, he added how foolishly the Bengalees wasted their time on debates and meetings. They talked, while the sly foreigners became richer at the cost of their helpless countrymen. They gave huge donations to the British Government for obtaining such hollow titles as 'Raja' and 'Rai Bahadur', while none of them extended a helping hand to his poor and starving countrymen. He regretted not only their dependence on foreign cloth for covering their nakedness, but also the easy manner in which they had fallen victims to the wiles of the English.

Because of this abjectly degrading condition of his countrymen, his anguished heart cried out in the *Bina* that there was nothing left

for India—no freedom, no happiness, no bravery worthy of emulation. India had become a vast graveyard.

Every song in his *Bharat-gan* expressed not only his love for India, but also his disgust at the slavish temperament of some of his countrymen. Over the educated and conscious community his songs exercised a great influence.

A sincere well-wisher of his countrymen, he passed away at the age of 44, relentlessly pursued by dire poverty and his creditors, on 11 March 1894.

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RAJANINATH ROY

A well-known progressive and one of the stalwarts of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj*, Rajaninath Roy was born on 15 December 1849 at Gaodia in Bikrampur, Dacca. A brilliant student, he stood first in the F.A. and B.A. Examinations of the Calcutta University. He was a very high official in the Government's Finance Department.

THE PATRIOTIC REFORMER

Though in Government service, he was not afraid to criticize Lord Curzon's Convocation Address of 1902.

He was an advocate of widow remarriage and intercaste marriage. He wanted the abolition of *kulinism* as well. After passing his final examination in the University, Rajaninath married Srimati Bidhumukhi, a *kulin* girl rescued from her marriage with a polygamous old man, in accordance with the Civil Marriage Act of 1872. This marriage, horrifying as it was to the orthodox people, became the subject of a small book, *Bidhumukhicharit*. A Brahmo, Rajaninath received the full support of his co-religionists when he contracted this marriage.

Rajaninath was a staunch supporter of female education. He cooperated with Durga Mohan Das in founding the Banga Mahila Vidyalaya in June 1876. He was also a great patron of the Brahmo Balika Vidyalaya. Keen to provide women with the best of education,

he fought for the introduction of the system of co-education in the Presidency College. He died at Bhowanipur on 15 April 1902.

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LAL MOHAN GHOSH

A great orator noted for his spirit of patriotism, Lal Mohan Ghosh, son of Ramlochan Ghosh, was born at Krishnagar in 1849. A barrister, he joined the Bar of the Calcutta High Court in 1873. He was the first Indian to try to enter the House of Commons as a Liberal candidate from Deptford in 1883. Though he failed, his attempt inspired Dadabhai Naoroji to follow in his footsteps in England. A member of the Bengal Legislative Council in 1893, he was a towering figure in the public life of Bengal till his death.

ADVOCATE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

He was drawn into the political life of Bengal in 1878-79 by the Indian Association's agitation against the Civil Service Examination Rules of 1877. The Indian Association, under the inspiring leadership of Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Basu, raised funds and deputed Lal Mohan Ghosh to England with a Civil Service Memorial for submission to Parliament.

Lal Mohan's mission to England was highly successful. His first great speech was delivered at a meeting held under the presidency of John Bright at Willis's Rooms in London on 23 July 1879. In course of the speech he passionately appealed to English constitutional principles and said: "Nor can England, without being utterly false to all her traditions, to her history and to herself, continue to refuse to us that boon of a constitutional government which it is the proudest boast and the greatest glory of this country to possess". This speech, which admirably projected to the English audience the manner in which England denied Indians their basic political rights, was a brilliant piece of oratory. It excited the admiration of his audience, including John Bright, himself the greatest orator of England of the day.

In July 1880 he, in association with Sir David Wedderburn, Hodgson Pratt and F. W. Chesson, led a deputation to Lord Hartington. The deputation prayed for the repeal of the Press Act and the Arms Act, in addition to emphasizing the need for raising the maximum age limit of the Indian Civil Service. It also prayed for the introduction of representative legislatures in India. The separate Memorial submitted on this demand stated that the Government should provide for the admission of elected representatives to the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils in a certain proportion to the nominated members. It was pointed out that two or three Indians nominated by the local Government as members of the Council were either officials or non-officials selected more for their rank and wealth than for their fitness and capacity. Though some of them had rendered service to the State, yet they could not claim to have that independence which would have normally characterized the activities of popular representatives. Besides, it was only through the introduction of the representative system in the Supreme and Provincial Legislatures that the Government could ascertain the real wants and opinions of the people and obtain popular sanction for its legislative and fiscal measures. The concrete proposal of the deputation was that towns enjoying municipal self-government should be formed into constituencies for electing members both to the Indian and Provincial Legislatures.

It should be noted that the Indian Councils Act of 1892, 55 and 56 Vic., C. 14, virtually granted representation to the Municipalities in the Provincial Councils and allowed members of the Provincial Legislatures to send their representatives to the Supreme Council, as prayed for in the Memorial. And before the passing of the Act of 1892, Surendranath Banerjea and several others continually agitated for the establishment of representative legislatures in India.

As for the Civil Service question, the Secretary of State for India placed on the table of the House of Commons, within twenty-four hours of the speech delivered by Lal Mohan at Willis's Rooms on 23 July 1879, the Rules for the Statutory Civil Service as envisaged in the Parliamentary Statute of 1870. It, however, did not meet the basic Indian demand for either raising the maximum age or holding simultaneous examinations in England and India.

Lal Mohan visited England again in 1883 to apprise Englishmen of the miserable condition of his countrymen as well as of the Indian viewpoint in regard to the Ilbert Bill.

ADVOCATE OF LEGAL EQUALITY

With his liberal views on representative government well known, it was natural that Lal Mohan would wholeheartedly support the agitation for the Ilbert Bill of 1883 which envisaged the establishment of legal equality between European and Indian offenders in the court of law. The opposition of the Europeans to the adoption of the Bill was so vehement that Government had ultimately to modify it to placate the former. The surrender of the Government was writ large on the Jurisdiction Act of January 1884. But the Bengali intelligentsia did not take lying down the abusive language used against them by the opponents of the Bill in course of the controversy. Lal Mohan delivered a speech at Dacca, which completely spiked Mr. Branson who had earlier given a very offensive speech at the same place. The Indian Daily News wrote that "in mere satire and power of invective it was worthy of the best orators of any time or age". From this controversy Indians learnt the lesson that they could protect their liberties and secure an expansion of their legitimate rights if they could initiate as violent an agitation as enabled the Europeans to throw out the proposed measure.

DEFENDER OF THE BENGAL JURY SYSTEM

At the Calcutta Town Hall meeting of 20 December 1892, Lal Mohan Ghosh delivered a forceful speech condemning the Government's Jury Notification of 20 October, which almost abolished the jury system in Bengal. Public pressure and the recommendations of the Jury Commission ultimately compelled the Government to withdraw the Jury Notification in March 1893.

A CRITIC

Lal Mohan was elected President of the Indian National Congress at Madras in 1903. His presidential speech was a trenchant criticism of the illiberal measures adopted by the Government in callous disregard of the feelings and opinions of the people. He criticized the holding of the costly *tamasha* of the Delhi Durbar on 1 January 1903, while lakhs of people died of starvation in the country. He dwelt on the growing autocratic tendency of the Government by referring to such reactionary measures as the Universities Bill, the Official Secrets Bill, the Madras Municipal Bill, etc. He was so outspoken on the occasion that he did not fail to point out how British exploitation of Indian trade and commerce had led to the

destruction of the indigenous industries in the country. This speech, his last public performance, made him very popular with those who were steadily veering away from the moderate views of the elderly politicians.

In course of the speech he also referred to the necessity of introducing free and compulsory primary education in the country.

A patriot like his elder brother, Manomohan Ghosh, Lal Mohan's eloquence and activities exercised an abiding influence upon his countrymen. His death in Calcutta on 18 October 1909 was looked upon by all as a national loss.

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KRISHNA KUMAR MITRA

A saintly character, "ascetic in temperament, unbending in his convictions, careless of the good things of life and remorseless in his hatred of shams and shows", Krishna Kumar Mitra was one of the most articulate forces of nationalism in Bengal during his lifetime.

A journalist, political worker and social reformer, Krishna Kumar Mitra, son of Gurucharan Mitra, a talukdar who once boldly fought against the indigo planters to defend the interests of the poor ryots, was born in December 1852 at Baghil in the Tangail subdivision of the Mymensingh district. Long before his graduation from the General Assembly's Institution in 1876 he became a staunch supporter of the *Brahmo Samaj* at Mymensingh. The rift over the marriage of Keshab Chandra Sen's daughter turned Krishna Kumar into a stalwart of the *Sadharan Brahmo Samaj* of India. He joined the City School as a teacher in 1879 on Rs. 30 per month. Subsequently, he worked as Professor of History at the City College on Rs. 70 per month till 1908. His life as a teacher was one of dedication. Together with Dwarkanath Gangopadhyaya, he was one of the Joint Secretaries of the Indian Association established in July 1876. He was also the

proprietor and editor of the *Sanjibani*, a vernacular weekly launched in 1883, with the help of Kali Sankar Sukul, Herambha Chandra Maitra and Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya.

THE PATRIOTIC PROTESTER

Krishna Kumar's patriotic zeal for all national causes was always a source of inspiration to his countrymen. One of the founding-members of the Indian Association, he accompanied Surendranath Banerjea in his Upper India tour in 1877 for rousing public opinion against the revised Civil Service Rules of 1877, which tendentiously handicapped Indian students desirous of entering the Covenanted Civil Service through the open competitive examination held in London. The remonstrant speeches of Krishna Kumar at different places of Bengal on this issue created among his educated countrymen a keen sense of awareness of the British policy of excluding Indians from all positions of trust and responsibility in the administration of the country.

PROTEST AGAINST OPPRESSION IN TEA GARDENS

Krishna Kumar was as outspoken in his condemnation of the wrongs done in India by the British as he was unflinching in his defence of some of the basic rights of his countrymen. He vehemently denounced the brutal oppression practised on the *coolies* by the European managers of Assam tea gardens. The Coolies or the Inland Emigration Act of 1882, instead of removing the loopholes of Act XIII of 1859, allowed European managers and labour contractors to create in the tea gardens a system of oppression unparalleled in the history of India. Kristo Das Pal characterized this Act of 1883 as a slavery law.

Krishna Kumar created a great deal of uneasiness in official quarters by regularly publishing in his paper reports of oppression sent to him by some patriotic correspondents of Assam. The publication of the reports of Dwaraknath Gangopadhyaya also from the Assam tea gardens, which he toured in July 1886, sent a horror down the spine of every Bengalee. The illegal and unfair methods employed by the *sirdars* to collect *coolies* for the gardens came to be exposed by the *Sanjibani* of 14 August 1886. *Coolies* jumped from the steamer into the Brahmaputra to escape slavery in the tea gardens. Women cried for help on their way to the gardens when they came to know what kind of life awaited them there. Heart-rending accounts

of severe whipping of *coolies*, as also of their confinement either in the fermenting houses where tea leaves were dried or in dungeons, published in issues of the *Sanjibani* from September to December 1886, created widespread indignation in the country.

Krishna Kumar stung the conscience of the Government by occasionally publicizing European managers' acts of sadism. On 3 July 1886, the *Sanjibani* commented on the ghastly manner in which a *coolie* woman's suckling child was kicked to death by the European manager of a tea garden. The brute escaped owing to the false report of the doctor and the Police Inspector to the effect that death was caused by a fall from the mother's arms. That the law court offered no protection to the tea-garden workers was demonstrably proved by the case of Khanta Domni, a *coolie* girl, who was violated in broad daylight by Pinches, manager of the Chaklatenga tea estate in Jorehat. Strangely enough, instead of Pinches, it was Domni who, together with her husband and her pleader (Apurva Krishna Pal), came to be punished by the criminal court on the charge of having instituted a false suit.

The crusader's zeal with which Krishna Kumar fought for Khanta Domni conduced to the creation of a strong public opinion against the criminal indifference of the Government to the continuance of unbridled oppression in the tea gardens. Under the pressure of public opinion the Government was forced, in spite of the tea-planters' memorial of September 1886, to punish Gibbons with imprisonment for having forged contract documents with the *coolies*. Subsequently, by Act VII of 1893, which amended the Inland Emigration Act of 1882, Government tried to check the evil. But it was a half-hearted attempt and ended only in sharpening the hostility of the politically-conscious Indians to the British system of exploitation obtaining in the tea gardens.

PROTEST AGAINST INDIGO OPPRESSION

Krishna Kumar used the columns of his *Sanjibani* in 1890 to expose the manner in which Mr. Hewling Luson, Joint Magistrate of Magura in Jessore, abused his executive power to force the ryots to sow indigo in their paddy lands for Mr. Selby of the Nowhatta Concern. Ryots who went to his court for justice were subjected to all manner of harassment. The *Sanjibani* of 5 April 1890 published Luson's letter (dated 18 March) to Bhupendra Kumar Ray, zamindar of Narail, threatening him with dire consequences for siding with

the ryots against the Nowhatta Concern. Strong public criticism ultimately compelled the Government to transfer Luson from Magura in June 1890 and to set up a Three-man Arbitration Committee to settle the issue between the planters and the ryots.

CRITIC OF THE BRITISH SYSTEM OF JUSTICE

Krishna Kumar was a severe critic of the British system of justice, which made a farce of the principle of equality. He trenchantly criticized, in his *Sanjibani* of 29 December 1883, the modification of the Ilbert Bill under the pressure of the secret Convention or Concordat made between the Government and the European Defence Association on 22 December. The shameless perpetuation of inequality between Europeans and Indians in the eye of the law by the Concordat, the odious terms of which were embodied in the Jurisdiction Act of January 1884, led Krishna Kumar to exhort his countrymen to form associations in every village in order to bring about a mass movement in support of their legitimate right to trial by jury, the majority of which should be Indians. He asked them to rise and gird up their loins if they wanted to protect themselves from oppression.

The acquittal of O'Hara, the murderer of Sheik Selim, on retrial by the Full Bench of the Calcutta High Court in March 1890 showed to Krishna Kumar how partial the British system of justice could be towards a European guilty of murdering a native. Racial bias made the system intolerable to Indians. Thus, commenting on the biased disposal of the Dum Dum Murder Case, Krishna Kumar's *Sanjibani* of 15 March 1890 wrote that the result of this retrial of a European by European Judges and a European jury was an eloquent proof of the system of injustice that prevailed in British India in the name of justice.

Krishna Kumar was also one of the denouncers of Sir Charles Elliott's Jury Notification of 20 October 1892, which, by arbitrarily abolishing the jury system in the seven districts of Bengal, caused bitter resentment among the people of Bengal. The *Sanjibani* of 5 November 1892 pointed out that its abolition meant that henceforth the life and death, the conviction and acquittal, of many accused persons would depend on the whims and prejudices of the judges. Besides, there would be no check on the miscarriage of justice. Ultimately, however, strong public opinion against the Notification,

together with the recommendation of the Prinsep Commission, led to the restoration of the jury system in Bengal in April 1893.

CRITIC OF THE UNPOPULAR GOVERNMENT

The British Government's unpopularity was constantly on the increase because of the unrestrained growth of oppression at every level and every branch of its administration. Oppressive taxes, including the Chaukidari tax of 1891, and ill-conceived policies tendentiously executed added to the discontent of the people. It was not surprising to see Lord Curzon attempting to stifle all criticisms of unpopular official policies, both external and internal, by promulgating Act V (the Indian Official Secrets Amendment Act) of 1904 in the face of the vehement opposition offered to its passage in the Viceroy's Council by the Hon'ble Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the Hon'ble Dr. Asutosh Mukherjee and the Hon'ble Nawab Sayed Muhammed. Under the Act a person suspected of having published any official secret could at once be arrested and prosecuted by a judge without waiting for Government sanction. The arrested man could get his release if only he could prove his innocence in the court of law.

The native papers rightly pointed out that the Amendment would prevent them from revealing to the public the impolitic and unjust acts of officials, on whom the fear of exposure had long acted as a healthy restraint. The inclusion of the blanket term 'civil affairs' in the Amendment constituted a positive threat not only to the freedom of the Press but also to the liberty of every individual. Commenting on this Amendment, Krishna Kumar opined that in a country where the people had no voice in the Government, the liberty of the native papers should never be curtailed, for they alone represented the people. He further stated in the *Sanjibani* of 27 August 1903: "History teaches us that it is when a Government becomes unpopular that thoughtless officials try to put down discontent by means of coercive measures. . . .". Needless to say, this illiberal measure added to the discontent of the people already agitated over Curzon's cruel proposal, disclosed in 1903, of redistributing the territories of Bengal.

Not only the Government's ruthlessness but also its extravagance, which was one of the causes of its unpopularity, came to be boldly criticized by Krishna Kumar. And this extravagance was seen in the annual exodus of the Government to the hills much to the disgust of the people. More painful in this respect was the Delhi Durbar of

1 January 1903, where Curzon thought of strengthening the foundations of the British Empire "by a mere parade of gold and jewels and of brilliant equipage and dresses". To make 1 January 1903 the commencement of a new era in the history of India, remarked Krishna Kumar, Curzon should have done some lasting good to the Indians by conferring on them a valuable right. That Curzon was disinclined both by temperament and by policy to confer any valuable privilege on the people was proved by his high-falutin Convocation Address of February 1902. Commenting on this Address, the *Sanjibani* of 27 February wrote that Curzon made the whole system of administration inimical to the growth of a spirit of self-reliance among the people. Educated Indians could never understand what was the Curzonian yardstick of their fitness either for responsible posts or for the independent exercise of any privilege on their part. Curzon's statement in the Address that editorials of native papers represented the opinions of the editors only, and not of the people, acted as a boomerang on the Government and further undermined its position with the discerning intelligentsia.

HATER OF SYCOPHANCY

Honest, upright and outspoken, Krishna Kumar could never tolerate any sycophancy on the part of his countrymen to please European officials. On 10 December 1891, 37 out of 75 Commissioners voted that Mr. Lee, the Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality, be given an additional Rs. 500 per month. Condemning this shameless act in the *Sanjibani* of 26 December 1891, Krishna Kumar asked the rate-payers not to support the candidatures of the sycophants among the elected members at the next election.

To Kali Nath Mitra's pleading for an increase in the pay of an able man like Mr. Lee who would otherwise go away, Krishna Kumar wrote: "If Lord Lansdowne goes away ten Lansdownes will be immediately had to fill his place". Mr. Lee, who drew Rs. 1,500 as Officiating Magistrate, was receiving Rs. 2,500 as Chairman. If he was not content with this, wrote Krishna Kumar, he was free to go anywhere he liked, but he had "no business to suck the money of the rate-payers of Calcutta". At a time when the Commissioners were engaged in abolishing the graded system of pay of their clerks for want of money and also when the municipal rates were decided to be raised to 21 per cent, it was shameful on their part to vote an increase in the pay of the Chairman.

Fortunately, Sir Charles Elliott taught the Commissioners a good lesson on honest expenditure by cutting down the voted amount to Rs. 250.

A STAUNCH CONGRESSMAN

Krishna Kumar was a staunch supporter of the Indian National Congress since the day of its inauguration in 1885. He wanted the Bengalees to identify themselves completely with the aims and activities of the Congress, because it offered the only means to bind the people of the different provinces of India by a new bond of unity, namely, the worship of the common Mother. Commenting on the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1890, he wrote in the *Sanjibani* of 27 December that India's sons—the Bengalee, the Punjabi, the Mahratta, the Oriya, the Assamese, the Madrasi—had all gathered together as so many brothers to offer their worship at the feet of their Mother. He exhorted them to sacrifice their all for the deliverance of their country.

The participation of a large number of women, including Kadambini Gangopadhyaya and Sarala Devi, in the deliberations of the Calcutta Congress in 1890 was treated by him as a heartening sign of the country's political progress.

After the termination of the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1901, he suggested (*Sanjibani*, 9 January 1902), with a view to awakening the masses to the importance of the Congress, the formation of district and subdivisinal committees, which would exert themselves in the cause of forming village committees. The village committees would instruct the farmers in new methods of cultivation, help carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, etc., arbitrate in civil and criminal cases, render medical aid and make arrangements for water supply, establish banks for lending money to villagers at a moderate rate of interest, impart physical, moral and intellectual education, and try to check the oppression practised by the police and the zamindar's *amlas*. The subdivisinal committees would supervise the work of the village committees, hold industrial exhibitions and keep an eye on the activities of the Subdivisinal Magistrate and Police Officer. The district committees would make public the wrongs done to the people, impart political and industrial education to the people through the agency of able men and send a monthly report to the Calcutta Congress Committee.

To Krishna Kumar the increasing interest taken by the Congress

in industrial exhibitions since its Poona session of 1895 was an encouraging sign. The industrial exhibition held in connection with the Poona session of the Congress in 1895 led him to observe that nothing was better calculated to draw the masses to the Congress. The Poona people thus showed the best way of imparting political education to the masses. Besides, he also believed in a steady and continuous political agitation as the best means of reanimating the inert masses of India.

As a member of the Congress, he also lent his voice to the Indian demand for the separation of the judicial and executive branches of the administration. He wanted the agitation over this demand to continue, ably supported by memorials containing well-authenticated information about all cases of miscarriage of justice resulting from the union of powers in the executive officer.

Krishna Kumar saw in the Sivaji festival, which was celebrated in Calcutta on 19 June 1902 under the auspices of the Congress stalwarts, a new bond of unity for the whole country.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Krishna Kumar supported every attempt at social reform which tended to improve the character of the individual and make him a source of regenerative energy in society. He worked with Surendranath Banerjea for the abolition of the Outstill System which, by cheapening the price of liquor, encouraged and spread drunkenness among the lower classes of the rural population, particularly in Hooghly.

Krishna Kumar's mind was absolutely free from all social prejudices and traditional inhibitions. A firm believer in women's education and emancipation, he had no doubt in his mind that the political and social progress of the country would be accelerated if women came forward to play an intelligent and active role in its affairs. The hostility of the orthodox section in society could not deter him from openly supporting the Age of Consent Bill in 1891.

The anti-Partition agitation threw into high relief Krishna Kumar's burning patriotism, fearlessness and spirit of sacrifice. He was the President of the Calcutta Anti-Circular Society, of which Sachindra Prasad Basu was the Secretary. This Society sought to protect the interests of students affected by Government action. The fearlessness he displayed at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal in April 1906 was a source of inspiration to his countrymen. He was deported from Bengal in 1908 under Regulation III of 1818.

and detained in Agra Fort till February 1910. To Surendranath Banerjea, his deportation was "a great mistake"; for he was all along a supporter of constitutional progress. But to the British Government, Krishna Kumar appeared as a formidable revolutionary exercising a tremendous influence over the youths of Bengal.

The true spirit of renascent Bengal was reflected in the activities of Krishna Kumar. He never indulged in destructive criticism. His approach to every problem was not only constructive, but conducive to national regeneration as well. Educationist, nationalist and humanist, Krishna Kumar Mitra passed away in Calcutta on 5 December 1936.

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GIRISH CHANDRA BASU

Son of Janakiprasad Basu, Girish Chandra Basu was born on 29 October 1853 at Berugram in Burdwan.

He passed the Entrance Examination from the Hooghly Branch School in 1870, the F.A. and B.A. Examinations from the Hooghly Mohsin College in 1873 and 1876 respectively, and the M.A. Examination in 1878, while he was teaching at the Cuttack Ravenshaw College. In December 1881, he left for England on a State Scholarship for specializing in agriculture at the Cirencester Royal Agricultural College. His examination results there were admirable. He excelled not only in Agriculture, but also in Chemistry and Veterinary Science. Before his return to India he became a member of the leading agricultural and chemical societies of England.

AN EXAMPLE OF PATRIOTISM

After his return to Calcutta in the middle of 1884, he declined all offers of high and lucrative positions with the British Government and chose to serve his country in his own independent way. The career he adopted seemed to have been determined long ago by his patriotic urge to make his expert knowledge of agriculture easily

available to the masses of cultivators upon whose improved methods of cultivation depended the prosperity of the country.

In April 1885 he brought out in Bengali a monthly called *Krishi Gazette*, which was followed by the publication of its English edition called the 'Agricultural Gazette'. The *Krishi Gazette*, containing articles written in a simple and lucid style, focussed the attention of the public on the miserable existence of the cultivators, whose hard labour in the field enabled the urban people to live in ease and comfort. It, then, emphasized that it was the duty of all—zamindars and peasants—to learn and use better methods of cultivation in order to increase the yield of the soil. In addition to spreading the knowledge of the means to improve the country's livestock as well as to increase the fertility of the soil through manuring and irrigation, the journal stressed the need to reduce the pressure of population on land. To effect it, Bengalees were asked to set up sugar, leather, jute, crockery, glassware, soap and other industries.

For training boys in agriculture and other ancillary matters Girish Chandra opened an agricultural branch in his institution called the Bangabasi School, which was established in 1887. This was done not merely to impart a particular kind of vocational education, as was once the purpose of Peary Charan Sircar while he was at Baraset, but also to inspire in students a sincere love for the soil as well as a missionary zeal for spreading the knowledge acquired by them in the school among the peasants. But, unfortunately for Bengal, this branch of the school had to be closed for want of the wherewithal and public support.

Nevertheless, in the field of general education Girish Chandra proved to be equally enthusiastic. His Bangabasi School and Bangabasi College, of which he was the zealous steward till the last day of his life, are a testimony to his belief that without proper English education Indians would not be able to raise themselves to the level of a nation capable of commanding respect in international society. But he also made it clear at the same time that English education should not lead one to imitate slavishly English dress, manners and customs. Personally averse to Anglicism, he hated to see any signs of it among his friends and students. This antipathy was clearly expressed in some of his writings as well. His personality exuded a patriotism which deeply influenced the character of many young men, particularly of those who, from 1905, took more than an academic interest in the political affairs of their country.

A sincere well-wisher of his countrymen and a reputed educationist, Girish Chandra Basu's purposeful life came to a close on 1 July 1939.

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NAGENDRA NATH GHOSH

Son of Bhagabati Charan Ghosh, an advocate of the Calcutta High Court, Nagendra Nath Ghosh was born in Bogra in August 1854.

He left for England in 1871, without completing his B.A. studies at the Presidency College, to appear at the Civil Service Examination. But he failed and returned to Calcutta as a barrister in 1876. Simultaneously with his practice in the Calcutta High Court, he worked as Professor of English in the Metropolitan College and edited the 'Law Review' (1880) and the 'Indian Nation' (1893). He was appointed Principal of the Metropolitan College after the retirement of Baidyanath Basu. He was a Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipality for a few years.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A moderate in his political views and a propagator of democratic ideals, Nagendra Nath attained prominence as a stout defender of the *Bangavasi* prosecuted by Government on a flimsy charge of sedition in 1891, which actually turned out to be a new threat to the freedom of the vernacular Press. Fortunately, however, good sense prevailed upon the Government to withdraw the charge.

An advocate of the cause of local self-government, a discussion on which figured prominently in his book entitled 'England's Work in India', he felt dismayed when Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Lord Curzon shamelessly undid the admirable spadework done by Lord Ripon in this sphere of activity. In 1899, he, together with others, resigned his Municipal Commissionership in protest against the undemocratic Municipal Act, fashioned by Mackenzie and thrust down the throats of Indians by Lord Curzon.

Nagendra Nath was an active member of the Indian National Congress. The Bengal Provincial Conferences also received his unstinted support.

He died on 3 April 1909.

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JOGENDRA CHANDRA BASU

A fearless journalist, Jogendra Chandra Basu, son of Madhab Chandra Basu of Berugram, was born on 30 December 1854 in his maternal uncle's house near Memari in Burdwan. He gave up his studies while a student of the F.A. Class at the Hooghly Mohsin College. He passed the Diploma Examination in Law from Allahabad, but did not join the bar of any court. After teaching for some time at the Janai School, he took to journalism and worked as Assistant Editor of the *Sadharani*, a paper owned and edited by Akshay Chandra Sircar of Chinsurah. Subsequently, he launched, with the help of Upendranath Singh, a pice weekly called *Bangavasi*, which became the most important organ of the orthodox Hindus. Its first number came out on 10 December 1881. He also edited the *Hindi Bangavasi*, *Dainik* and the 'Telegraph' (an English paper). He was temporarily associated with the management of the monthly, *Janmabbumi*.

DENOUNCER OF HYPOCRISY

Though conservative in his views, he rendered great service to Hindu society by asking its members to be on their guard against persons who were shamelessly adulterating, in the name of progress, Hindu religion and culture. Their rank hypocrisy affected not merely the literature of the Bengalees, but also their trade and commerce and their politics. His satires, *Model Bhagini* and *Bangalee Charitra*, which clearly bear the influence of Indranath Bandyopadhyaya, show how intense was his detestation for English-educated shamblers in society.

ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

Jogendra Chandra's *Bangavasi*, however conservative a paper it might have been, admirably succeeded in creating a widespread feeling

of hostility towards the British and their government in Bengal. Together with the editor of the *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika*, Jogendra Chandra carried on through his own paper a tearing campaign against the Age of Consent Bill of 1891. An intense hatred for Sir Andrew Scoble, the author of the Bill, was whipped up among those who treated the measure as a tendentious interference on the part of the Government with the Hindu religion. Criticism of the Bill coming from such persons like Ramesh Chandra Mitra, Maharaja of Darbhanga, Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, Raja Rajendralal Mitra, Raja Peary Mohan Mukhopadhyaya, Sarat Kumar Singha of Paikpara, Jadulal Mallick of Pathuriaghata, Ganesh Chunder Chunder and even Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, not to speak of a host of other well-known men in society, offered ready ammunition for the guns of Jogendra Chandra's *Bangavasi*.

The failure of Jogendra Chandra's campaign only added to his antagonism towards the British Government. He condemned English education as being destructive of Hindu manners, morality and religion. The Government was severely criticized for not providing for the religious education of Hindu boys, as was done in the case of Muslims or Christians. It was painful to see the tide of English education carrying away Hindu boys from their manners, morality and religion.

Because of these attempts to inflame the feelings of the people against the Government, the authorities under instructions from Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, instituted a case of sedition in 1891 against the editor and printer of the *Bangavasi*. This prosecution was considered an act of doubtful wisdom and a menace to the liberty of the newspaper press in the country. "The tone of the indicted articles was indeed condemned, but the opinion was expressed that it was not proper for Government to attach so much importance to articles written under strong excitement at a time when the people were really under the impression that Government contemplated an interference with their religion. The prosecution was also looked upon as a step taken by Government preliminary to the revival of the Vernacular Press Act, and as a proof of the strong dislike felt by Government for the vernacular newspapers, for their outspoken criticism of its acts and intentions" (Confidential Annual Report on the Vernacular Newspapers published in the Lower Provinces and in Assam in 1891). However, the Government withdrew the case after the management of the *Bangavasi* had tendered an

unqualified apology. The *Navayuga* pointed out that "Government's object in pardoning was not to do an act of generosity, but to escape from a doubtful position". As for the *Bangavasi* itself, the editor wrote on 13 June 1891 that they were not rebels and had not the means to rise in rebellion against the Government. To undermine and diminish the people's loyalty had never been the object of their paper.

Whatever be it, the *Bangavasi* case, together with Lokamanya Tilak's case of 1897, made the Government feel the necessity of taking some measure to control the preaching of sedition and disaffection through newspapers. India Act IV (Chalmers' Sedition Law) of 1898, which amended sections 124A and 505 of the Indian Penal Code, made Indian newspapers liable to severe punishment for statements "promoting enmity between classes" and "conducting to public mischief".

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Jogendra Chandra's *Bangavasi* gave a new dimension to the growing political consciousness among the people by severely criticizing the methods adopted by the Congress to further the political progress of the country. About the Congress session of 1890 in Calcutta, it wrote on 27 December that nothing could be obtained from the British by mere begging. Indians must first develop their industrial and economic strength in order to convince England of the necessity of granting them political rights. For six years Congress members had done nothing other than spending about eighteen lakhs of rupees on travelling and other purposes for attending Congress sessions. Truly tangible and useful results could have been achieved if this money were invested in the development of the indigenous industries as well as in the establishment of new factories.

When the Congress session of 1901 in Calcutta directed its attention to the question of agricultural and industrial development, the *Bangavasi* of 28 December expressed its pleasure and wrote that the delivery of "monster speeches at monster meetings" would never do any good to the country. "The firing of blank cartridges" would never cause the destruction of the "comet of evil". It further added that "the Bengali's speechifying" (it was probably a dig at Surendranath Banerjea) had come to be regarded almost as a theatrical performance. Its most caustic comment was: "Some one lately made

the remark that he was thinking of arranging for a speech by a Babu orator instead of a *jatra* performance by Mati Ray in his house on the Kali Puja night".

Needless to say, these writings contained the seeds of the *Swadeshi* agitation of 1905. Even the 'Report on the Vernacular Newspapers published in the Lower Provinces and in Assam in 1891' admitted that "the object of all such writing was to establish the proposition that British commerce being the foundation of British supremacy, anything that tended to injure that commerce was sure to receive foremost attention from the British Government. If Indians could succeed in giving up the use of English goods, Government would find itself compelled to conciliate them by granting political rights for the purpose of inducing them to use such goods".

All this apart, the *Bangavasi* of 9 January 1891 regretted very much the lack of unity and loyalty to the cause of the motherland among the Indians. These had helped the English to conquer Bengal in 1757 and to put down the Mutiny in 1857. It felt that if 250-million Indians had resolved to be hostile to the handful of Englishmen sojourning in the country, "the heroes of the White Island could not have stayed here for one moment: like grains of sand under the foot of an elephant, they would have been trodden upon and ground into dust".

Jogendra Chandra's *Bangavasi* always advocated that the Congress should be a people's organization. After the Congress session of 1890 in Calcutta, the paper wrote (3 January 1891) that it was wrong to deny the public access to the meetings of what was indisputably a public organization maintained on public money. "The Baboos discussed the question of the deliverance of their country, yet no one was allowed to be present without paying an admission fee". This stultified the purpose of preaching to the people the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Though very conservative in his views, there is no gainsaying the fact that Jogendra Chandra Basu was a great patriot. The anti-British feeling generated by his writings cannot be ignored while recounting the history of the country's political progress. He died at Madhupur on 18 August 1905.

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I and II, 1891; Part II, 1901); Confidential Annual Report on the Vernacular Newspapers published in the Lower Provinces and Assam in 1891.

ANANDA CHANDRA MITRA

Son of Banga Chandra Mitra, Ananda Chandra Mitra was born in 1854 at Bajrayogini in Vikrampur (Dacca). He worked as a school teacher in Mymensingh for a long time before joining the Calcutta Corporation as an officer. He was a progressive Brahmo. In 1878, he became a stalwart of the *Sadbaran Brahmo Samaj*.

SPIRIT OF DEDICATION

In the autumn of 1877 he joined a new movement initiated by Sivanath Sastri with a view to combining the religious and ethical idealism of the *Brahmo Samaj* with the new political ideal of Surendranath Banerjea. Sivanath Sastri firmly believed that "the political goal of democratic self-government could not be achieved unless Indian national politics were wedded to the ideals of spiritual and social freedom for which the *Brahmo Samaj* openly stood". Ananda Chandra fully subscribed to these views of Sivanath Sastri.

It was in the garden house of the Mallicks of Sindhuriapatty in Baranagore that Ananda Chandra, together with Bipin Chandra Pal, Sundarimohan Das, Sarat Chandra Roy, Tarakisore Roychowdhury (Santdas Baba) and Kalisankar Sukul, was ritualistically initiated into the movement by Sivanath Sastri. They condemned the caste system and the practice of keeping women in seclusion. They discouraged the marriage of young men before the age of 21 and of girls before 16. More inspiring was their vow that they would neither serve the British Government in any capacity, nor save anything for themselves from their incomes after meeting the needs of their families. Any surplus that they might come to have would be unhesitatingly offered to the service of the country. Thus, they voluntarily adopted a life of poverty and self-sacrifice in the larger interests of society.

The noble spirit of service which characterized the lives of the members of this exclusive group exercised a salutary influence over many conscious young men of Bengal. Like his other dedicated

friends, Ananda Chandra kept the vow he had taken till the last day of his life.

LOVE FOR COUNTRY

Ananda Chandra's deep love for his country came to be effectively expressed in some of the poems in his *Mitrakavya*. The same spirit of patriotism was also clearly reflected in his *Bharat Mangal* (1894), an incomplete epic on the social revolt brought about by the rational ideas and courageous endeavours of Raja Rammohun Roy.

A noble example of self-consecration before his countrymen, Ananda Chandra Mitra passed away on 22 December 1903.

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GOBINDA CHANDRA DAS

A poet and patriot, Gobinda Chandra Das was born on 16 January 1855 at Jaidebpur in the Bhowal estate in Dacca. He lost his father, Ramnath Das, very early in life. Though poverty hampered his schooling, it could not, however, stifle his genius for poetry. It steadily blossomed while he grew up under the shelter of the Bhowal Raj family. But, unfortunately, one of his early writings led to his expulsion from the Raj shelter. His struggle against odds for bare existence made him more courageous and absolutely fearless of the hazards of life.

HIS PATRIOTISM

Of all his poems the one that helped most to stir the patriotism of his countrymen was entitled *Swadesh*. In this poem he pricked the conscience of his educated countrymen by pointing out that India, under foreign control and drained of all her precious wealth by the British, had long ceased to be their own land. It was shameful to see them going to England and returning with English wives and English culture. There was not even the remotest possibility of such shameless men, who cared little for their own society and its culture,

becoming the masters of what they glibly claimed to be their own land.

It was also Gobinda Chandra Das who offered to his countrymen the Bengali rendering of A. O. Hume's stirring poem, 'Awake', occurring in his book entitled 'Old Man's Hope'. In the activities and writings of Hume, who was described by Aswini Kumar Datta in 1913 as "the great sage, the venerable Rishi, at whose feet educated India sat to learn the lessons of nation-building", Gobinda Chandra found enough inspiring material to keep alive the patriotic feeling of his countrymen.

He was also at one with Hume in holding:

"Sons of Ind, why sit ye idle,

Wait ye for some Deva's aid?

Buckle to, be up and doing!

Nations by themselves are made!"

This was the first stanza of Hume's poem, 'Awake', which, when the whole of it was brought out in Bengali by Gobinda Chandra, caused a great stir among the politically-conscious people of the country.

Harassed by poverty till the last day of his life, Gobinda Chandra Das passed away in Dacca in 1918.

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PRAMATHA NATH BASU

A great geologist, held in high esteem by his countrymen not only for his inestimable services to the cause of the progress of Indian science and industry but also for his indomitable spirit of patriotism, Pramatha Nath Basu, son of Taraprasanna Basu and son-in-law of the great patriotic Civilian, Romesh Chunder Dutt, was born on 12 May 1855 at Gaipur in the 24-Parganas.

A brilliant scholar, Pramatha Nath was educated at the Krishnagar Collegiate School, Krishnagar College and St. Xavier's College. After passing the F.A. Examination, he sailed for England, in September 1874, on the Gilchrist scholarship for higher studies in

Science. After graduating in Science from the London University, he entered the Royal School of Mines, where, in spite of his brilliant results, he was debarred from receiving the Edward Forbes' Medal and Prize for a technical reason. On the whole, his academic record in England from October 1874 to May 1880 was admirable.

The Secretary of State for India, alarmed by his political activities in England, appointed him in the higher cadre of the Geological Survey of India in May 1880. He returned to India in July 1880 and assumed his duties as Assistant Superintendent (third grade) in the Geological Survey of India. Despite his proven competence as a geologist of the highest calibre, he could not, because of his colour, become a permanent Superintendent. He voluntarily retired as Deputy Superintendent on 15 May 1903, after he had been superseded in the service by his junior colleague, T. Holland. After retirement, he was engaged for making a geological survey of the Mayurbhanj State. In 1904, he discovered the rich iron-ore deposits at the foot and along the slopes of the Gurumahisani hill, to which he drew the attention of J. N. Tata who was then prospecting the Central Provinces. The proximity of this site to the coal-fields of Bengal as well as to the sea led the Tatas to establish their famous Iron and Steel Works at Sakchi, subsequently renamed Jamshedpur. It also redounds to the credit of Pramatha Nath to have discovered the iron ores of Dhulli and Rajhara in the Central Provinces as early as 1887.

ADVOCATE OF POLITICAL PROGRESS

As Secretary to the India Society in London, he worked courageously for some time for the cause of his motherland. Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerjee and Ananda Mohan Basu were all intimately associated with this Society's work while they were in England.

It was Pramatha Nath, who, as Secretary to the Society, organized a meeting, on 23 July 1879, at Willis's Rooms where the Indian Association's delegate, Lal Mohan Ghosh, spoke on the necessity of relaxing the new rules, which severely handicapped Indian students desirous of appearing at the competitive examination in London for admission into the Covenanted Civil Service. The meeting was presided over by John Bright, Liberal M.P., who not only championed the Indian cause but also drew the attention of the British public to it.

Pramatha Nath himself addressed many political meetings, at which he boldly criticized the Government for the wrongs it had done, and were doing, to Indians. This was disliked by the India Office. "What, I think, was especially obnoxious to the Secretary of State", revealed Pramatha Nath in one of his writings, "was the freedom with which I criticized Government when speaking on Indian subjects". The Secretary of State had him removed from England by appointing him in the Geological Survey of India as Assistant Superintendent.

His unhappy experience of Government service, however, made him a keener advocate of the political and industrial progress of his country. His identification with the *Swadeshi* movement against the Partition of Bengal in 1905 was an unmistakable sign of his disgust at the unbridled autocracy of the British Government.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Pramatha Nath was an outspoken denouncer of the caste system. He wrote an essay on it to show how prejudicial it was to the interests of society. As a matter of fact, his belief in the caste system was shaken, as early as 1864, by the influence exercised over him by Keshab Chandra Sen. His growing disregard for it turned into positive antipathy when he was asked to do penance for obtaining readmission into his caste after his return from England in 1880. He felt that his countrymen must discard their irrational customs and prejudices if they wanted to salvage their society from stagnation and set it firmly on the path to progress and regeneration.

He was also an advocate of a fair deal for widows in society. A small poem of his in his *Abakash Kusum*, published in 1871, shows how deeply moved he was at the sight of the unmitigated sufferings of widows in Bengal.

MENTAL REGENERATION

To Pramatha Nath, the mental regeneration of his countrymen was the pre-requisite of all manner of progress in society, and the best means of furthering this cause lay in the serious cultivation of their mother tongue. He sincerely desired the introduction of Bengali in the University's undergraduate and post-graduate stages of study as early as 1891. But more important than that was the stress he laid, in one of his essays, on the need of imparting the

knowledge of science to students through the medium of Bengali. Though not a new idea, he gave its spread a fresh impetus.

For promoting the sustained and purposeful cultivation of the Bengali language, he, in cooperation with other like-minded patriots, founded the Bengal Academy of Literature, which was entrusted with the task of compiling Bengali textbooks on different subjects of study. In 1894, this body was merged in the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*. Pramatha Nath sincerely felt that education for the youths of the country could be made truly national in character if it were helped to strike root in the vernacular as its medium.

The movement for national education, virtually set on foot by the Curzonian policy of imposing bureaucratic control over the Calcutta University in 1904 as well as by the *Swadeshi* agitation stemming from the partition of Bengal in 1905, found in Pramatha Nath a staunch supporter. Nothing at that time seemed to be nearer to his heart than this cause undertaken by the National Council of Education. If Satish Chandra Mukherjee was the Council's livewire, 'Raja' Subodh Chandra Mullick and Sir Rash Behari Ghose its patriotic financiers, Pramatha Nath was its most dedicated and selfless worker. When the Bengal Technical Institute was founded under its auspices on 25 July 1906, Pramatha Nath became its first honorary Principal.

ADVOCATE OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION

When in England, Pramatha Nath realized that his country's all-round progress and regeneration depended to a great extent on its industrial progress. His countrymen, therefore, had to be educated in the natural sciences as well as in the proper use of scientific methods in the field of industry. After his return from England, he tried his best to spread this idea among them. This was necessary not only for stopping the economic drain of India, but also for developing her resources in a way beneficial to her people. Presenting the idea more forcefully to his countrymen in his presidential speech at the first Industrial Conference of 1891, he pointed out that India's industrial backwardness was primarily responsible for the helplessness and distress of her people. The remedy of this situation lay in the establishment and development of industries by Indians themselves. It would not only create a spirit of self-reliance among the industrialists and enable them to take a patriotic pride in their industrial enterprises, but also help to relieve the distress of the masses.

As an accurate knowledge of the natural sciences was needed

for the success of industrial undertakings, it was high time, he pointed out, that scientific books were written in Bengali. His own *Prakritik Itibas* (Rudiments of Physical Geography), published in 1884, was an inspiring example for all to follow in the field of writing scientific books in Bengali.

Pramatha Nath was also aware of the fact, as can be made out from his article entitled 'Educational Reform in Bengal' (Calcutta Review, January 1888), that the success of Indian industrial undertakings depended as much on the efficiency of ordinary workers as on that of skilled factory operatives. He felt that both of them should be given some sort of education to enable them to go about their work intelligently. He wanted "foremen and masters" also to be educated in elementary science in secondary schools. As for teachers of such schools, chemists and other scientific men attached to factories, his suggestion was that they should all have "a superior degree of scientific training", that is, higher technical education. Large industries, which involved the use of scientific methods and appliances and which could help the country to become rich, badly needed such trained hands.

As higher technical education was only a special development of scientific education, students of Chemistry or Physics should try to learn it thoroughly. To promote this purpose through a well-integrated scheme, he strongly advocated the reform of the country's educational system. What it badly needed was a scientific bias. The reform was necessary, wrote he in his 'Educational Reform of Bengal', to produce "scientific specialists", who might "contribute to the rise of new manufactures or the renewal of old ones", and who, if they failed to secure industrial employment, would be able to earn their livelihood as lecturers, engaged in disseminating a knowledge of science and laying thereby the foundation of industrial progress.

In his pamphlet entitled 'Technical and Scientific Education in Bengal' (October 1887), he offered a comprehensive scheme of reform relating to the scientific and technical education of the youths of Bengal. He wanted the introduction of the study of science at every stage of University education. Well-phased, the scheme was designed to help graduates specialize in science subjects. To give his scheme a technical bias, he proposed the establishment of a Science and Technological Institute at Presidency College. (The Engineering classes at Presidency College, which were later shifted to Sibpore, fell far short of his expectations. These catered at that time mostly for

the Survey Department.) Unfortunately, the Government took only an academic interest in his proposal. And it was not until 1906 that the University instituted the Intermediate in Science Course, which was an encouraging step in the direction of the reform advocated by him.

Practical-minded as he was, he specified in his pamphlet the "science industries" which could absorb the trained hands from his proposed Science and Technological Institute. The list included dyeing, tannery, sugar-refining, soap-making, glass manufacturing, electro-engineering, mining and cotton mills. They were to be established by Indians themselves with the help and advice of Indian technologists, who would also point out new openings for profitable investments of Indian capital. As industrialists needed to pool all their resources and technical knowledge to attain a high standard of efficiency in production, they were advised by Pramatha Nath to form a 'Society for the Development of Indian Industries'. Mutual help and cooperation was to be the keynote of the Society's policy.

To make the wealthy aware of the importance of industrial development in the nation's life, long weighed down with poverty and backwardness, Pramatha Nath took the initiative in convening an Industrial Conference in Calcutta in 1891. This Conference, attended by men of wealth and influence, was presided over by Pramatha Nath himself. Out of this Conference was born the Indian Industrial Association. Its functions were to spread technical education, to collect information about Indian manufactures and to point out new openings for industrial enterprises. To spread the knowledge of science and technology, as pleaded by Pramatha Nath, lectures were delivered to select audiences under its auspices. The Association also organized industrial exhibitions on a large scale once every year from 1893 to 1900. Prizes were awarded to the owners of the best exhibits.

The Association's plan of work, master-minded by Pramatha Nath, was of great help to the Congress when it held its industrial exhibition in Calcutta in 1901. It also led many patriotic industrialists to open joint-stock companies. Pramatha Nath himself started a soap factory. It did not last long. But his coal mine proved to be a profitable enterprise. The bracing climate necessary for the growth of a spirit of self-reliance and of challenge to foreign exploitation was, thus, created in Bengal on the eve of the *Swadeshi* movement. The selfless endeavours of Pramatha Nath in this field of activity were of inestimable value to the country.

One of the heralds of Bengal's *Swadeshi cult*, an educationist tirelessly working for the cause of national awakening, the scholarly author of 'A History of Hindu Civilization During British Rule' (in 3 volumes), Pramatha Nath Basu passed away at Ranchi on 27 April 1934.

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SWARNAKUMARI DEBI

A poetess, novelist and social worker, Swarnakumari Debi, the fourth daughter of Debendranath Tagore and the wife of Janaki Nath Ghosal, was born about 1855. Educated and brought up in the highly enlightening atmosphere at home, Swarnakumari Debi's remarkable literary and public activities not merely made her the cynosure of all eyes but also justified the cause of women's emancipation in society. She edited for a long time, with efficiency, boldness and imagination, the well-known journal, *Bharati*.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Her patriotic love for her country was reflected in her novel, *Dipannirvan*, in which she showed how Indian disunity had helped Muslims to overrun the country since the beginning of the 12th century. Fratricidal wars and petty bickerings among the Indian chiefs constituted the bane of their freedom. She thus pointed out indirectly that the most important postulate of India's political progress in the teeth of the opposition of the British rulers was the development of a sense of unity among her people.

Like her husband, Swarnakumari Debi also took an active interest in the activities of the Congress. In 1889, she, together with Kadambini Gangopadhyaya, Pandita Ramabai and a few other ladies, attended as delegates the Congress session at Bombay. In the Congress session of 1890 at Calcutta the number of delegates, including Swarnakumari Debi and Kadambini Gangopadhyaya, was larger. The *Sanjibani* of 10 January 1891 reported: "The last Congress saw more than a hundred native ladies. And not only did native ladies

attend the Congress, but one of them, Mrs Kadambini Ganguly, B.A., even addressed the assembly. How delightful it was to see one of India's daughters addressing such an assembly in English!" This growing political consciousness among women augured well for the country.

It was Swarnakumari Debi's influence which made her daughter, Sarala Debi, wife of Rambhuj Datta Chowdhury of Punjab, a patriotic worker in the cause of the Congress. Sarala Debi, it may be noted, inaugurated in 1903 the *Birashtami* festival in Bengal with a view to encouraging young men to imbibe the manliness and the spirit of sacrifice of Indian heroes of the past.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

Swarnakumari Debi tried to further the cause of social regeneration by promoting the welfare of women. Her *Sakhi Samiti* founded in 1866, of which she was the Secretary, was designed to inspire women to take part in all kinds of national activities. To achieve this purpose, the *Samiti* undertook the task of educating and training helpless widows and girls, who in future were expected to dedicate themselves to the cause of spreading education among women in society.

Her awareness of the magnitude of the task of making women self-reliant and play a conscious and intelligent role in the country's social and political progress was clearly reflected in her novel, *Snehalata*.

For promoting self-reliance among women, the *Sakhi Samiti* organized a 3-day women's industrial fair within the precincts of the Bethune School. The fair was a great success. The exhibits made by women held out a new hope for them.

A purposeful writer, a social worker dedicated to the cause of re-edifying the hopes of women, and one of the first women members of the Congress, Swarnakumari Debi died in 1932.

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HEROES OF THE SANTAL REBELLION, 1855

The Santal rebellion of 1855 constitutes an inspiring chapter in the history of Bengal. Written in blood and tears, this chapter shows how a simple people were goaded into rebellion by a combined system of oppression unrestrainedly practised by the zamindars and their retainers, the mahajans (money-lenders) and their mustajirs (agents), the police and the revenue and court amlahs (petty officials).

The Santals, who had settled in the lowlands of Birbhum and Rajmahal under the temptation of high wages and easy rents, were shamelessly subjected by the cunning and avaricious zamindars, traders and money-lenders of the plains to extortion, oppressive exactions, abuse and violence and forcible dispossession of property and seizure of cattle, crops and ponies on grounds of non-payment of debt. Usurious interests of loans added to the debt of the poor Santals. False weights and measures used by the traders not only deprived them of their just profits in business transactions, but steadily reduced them to beggary and ruin. Serfdom became their inescapable lot. Justice was denied to them in the distantly-situated courts of law. Darogahs (police officials) and court amlahs, all amenable to bribery, became willing instruments of oppression in the hands of the unconscientious zamindars, traders and mahajans. British officials remained crassly indifferent to the grievances of the Santals. The *Sabibs*, as the Santal manifesto in the Kythee Hindi tongue (25 July 1855) stated, delegated the duty of investigation to subordinate officials, who were as corrupt and oppressive as the hucksters of the plains. What made their serfdom more galling was the sight of their comparatively free brethren, who had achieved prosperity by working on the construction of the new railway track.

THE WORM BECAME THE DRAGON

From the cold season of 1854-55 the Santals became restless. Unrelieved oppression ultimately made the proverbial worm turn and assume the proportions of a blood-thirsty and fire-breathing dragon. On 30 June 1855 the disgruntled Santals set out towards Calcutta under the leadership of the brothers, Seedo and Kanoo; and on 7 July 1855 they were provoked into violence by the foolish action of the Darogah of Thanna-Dighee. Blood was spilled. The worm had

become a dragon, spreading fire on its onward march until it came to be halted by crack British regiments available in Eastern India. Martial Law had to be proclaimed. During its operation from 10 November 1855 to 3 January 1856 stern measures were taken against the rebels by Major-General Lloyd and Col. Bird. The ring-leaders were summarily tried and hanged. If the Martial Law steeled their resolution to continue the fight, the proclamation of pardon had no other effect than to make them treat it with defiance and contempt. It was only after betrayals had deprived them of leadership and defeats had thinned their ranks that they gradually abandoned the fight and retreated into the jungles.

THE UNKNOWN BRAVE-HEARTED SANTALS

But their bravery in the face of overwhelming odds was truly inspiring. The stories of their bravery and manliness given by Major Jervis in his Personal Narrative constitute an eloquent tribute to their do-or-die spirit. "On one occasion the Santals, 45 in number, took refuge in a mud house. The Magistrate called on them to surrender, but the only reply was a shower of arrows from the half-opened door". The sepoys then cut a large hole through the wall and asked the rebels to surrender under the threat of being fired upon. "The door again half opened and a volley of arrows was the answer. A Company of Sepoys advanced and fired through the hole. I once more called on the inmates to surrender, while my men reloaded. Again the door opened, and a volley of arrows replied. Some of the Sepoys were wounded, the village was burning all around us. . . . and at last, as the discharge of arrows from the door slackened, I resolved to rush in and save some of them alive, if possible. When we got inside, we found only one old man, dabbled with blood, standing erect among the corpses. One of my men went up to him, calling him to throw away his arms. The old man rushed upon the Sepoy, and hewed him down with his battle axe". "Brave to infatuation", these Santals "did not understand yielding", added Major Jervis. Many of them, like the ones recorded above, died standing, without ever trying to seek safety in surrender. These unknown brave-hearted Santals were as inspiring in their action as the emblazoned heroes. True enough, British guns and the hangmen's noose silenced their voice of protest against oppression, but their indestructible and invincible spirit shone more brightly in the gloom of defeat.

THE KNOWN HEROES OF THE INSURRECTION

Kanoo Manjee and his brother, Seedoo, were the leaders of the Santal insurrection. They were the sons of Narain Manjee of Bugnadee.

Kanoo, a Soobah (governor), was aged 35 (Judicial Proceedings, No. 82, 20 December 1855). He and Seedoo were one day personally directed by God to pay the revenue straight to the Sircar, and not through the Darogah or the Izaradar 'Paltun' *sabib*. They were asked not only to expel the mahajans, but also to deprive the zamindars of all authority. They were further told to see to it that every Santal shared the land equally. Kanoo and Seedoo sent *perwanahs* to this effect to the officers and zamindars of Bhaugulpore and Birbhum. These *perwanahs* were drawn up for them by Kirta, Bhadoo and Sunnoo Manjees.

On 7 July (Saturday) 1855 the Darogah of Thanna-Dighee, on hearing of the assembling of rebellious Santals under the leadership of Kanoo and Seedoo, came to arrest them with sepoy and cartloads of rope. Seedoo killed Mahesh Lall, the Darogah, while Kanoo slew Manick Chand Chowdhri, the foremost shopkeeper and mahajan. Three others were killed in the skirmish. The sepoy ran away in fear.

Kanoo and Seedoo had no hand in the subsequent murder of some Europeans.

Seedoo was arrested through the treachery of Tulsi Santal and his associates, who were subsequently hacked to pieces by the rebels. The man who had Kanoo arrested was Jorawar Singh (also called Joraobur Ghotmul).

Chand Manjee, aged 30, and Bhyroo (or Bhairab) Manjee, aged 20, were the less known brothers of Kanoo and Seedoo. They also took part in the insurrection and were seized through treachery together with Kanoo.

The four brothers were sentenced to life imprisonment in December 1855, together with Prithee Manjee, Mota Manjee, Nemaee Manjee, Hureedoss Manjee, Moraree Manjee, Kumbée, Doorga Manjee, Babooram Soobah, Birmah Thacoor, Dharm Thacoor, Sarkari Soobah, Bhadoo Santal, Johlar Santal, Gooba Santal, Mungta Moonshee, Jibna Paramanick, Boora Santal, Sham Soobah, Rumabae Manjee, Alhar Manjee, Peroo Manjee, Harree Manjee, and Champa Manjee. They were all charged with rebellion against the State and other crimes under Clause 1 Section 3 of Regulation VIII of 1822.

Kamoo Manjee (nicknamed 'Jutha' from his plaited hair),

son of Soondur Manjee, also played an important role in the rebellion. He was the Soobah of Kunteepore (Judicial Proceedings, No. 82, 20 December 1855). He was sentenced to 7 years' hard labour.

Bechoo Raot Gwallah (a Soobah) was tried by court martial and sentenced to death. He was hanged near his village as a warning to the Santal rebels.

Jutoo Rai was also sentenced to death by hanging, but the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal commuted this sentence to 7 years' hard labour at the Suri Jail. Munnoo, Mungla, Chaund Roy, Burrea and Anoo were hanged by the neck until dead near the camp at Jilmillu (Judicial Proceedings, Nos. 77 and 78, dated 6 December 1855).

The death sentence on Samoo, Burha, Luckhan, Herma, Humra, Hureea, Baloo, Phaggoo of Banderpanee, Modun, Dusumit, Dhusma, Bodhun, Bisoo of Banderpanee, Thukra, Souna, Bisoo of Lukupahar, Puras, Mungal, Haboo, Goomorer, Seetan, Hurmas, Bheem, Soorjee, Kanu of Lukupahar, Gunoi, Pyka and Phagoo of Balua-decha was commuted to life imprisonment (Judicial Proceedings, Nos. 78 and 99, 20 December 1855). They were all held guilty of illegally assembling "in arms for purposes treasonable to the State and subversive of the public tranquillity".

Jugdies Sonthal, guilty of rebellion, was also hanged. About 56 prisoners were sentenced by the Sessions Judge (Birbhum) to rigorous imprisonment, ranging from 3 to 5 years (Judicial Proceedings, Nos. 262, 263, 264, 265 and 276, 27 December 1855). And quite a large number of prisoners were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment, ranging from 5 to 7 years (Judicial Proceedings, Nos. 203-213, dated 31 January 1856).

This was how the poor Santals were put down by the callous Government for seeking freedom from oppression. They had not in vain blazed a trail of blood to obtain redress of their grievances. The reverberation of their loud protest against oppression was heard far and wide in the country and did not augur well for the alien rulers.

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ASWINI KUMAR DATTA

A great popular leader of Bengal, Aswini Kumar Datta was born on 25 January 1856 at Patuakhali in the Backerganj district, while his father, Brajamohan Datta, was posted there as a Munsiff. His paternal home, however, was at Batajore in Barisal.

After passing the Entrance Examination from Dacca in 1869, Aswini Kumar entered the Presidency College, where he read up to the Fourth Year Class. It was from Krishnagar College, however, that he graduated in 1878. He came back to Presidency College and passed his M.A. and B.L. Examinations from there in 1879 and 1880 respectively.

Before his M.A. Examination he worked for a few months as headmaster of Chatra School. But after taking his Law degree in 1880, he enrolled himself as a pleader at Barisal. Had he continued at the Bar, as was once publicly observed by Bhupendra Nath Basu (a great attorney himself), he might have risen to that height of greatness attained by Dr. Rash Behari Ghose at the Bar of the Calcutta High Court. He had all the qualities of a successful lawyer excepting one, namely, the desire to prevaricate in the interests of his clients. He was too truthful to persuade himself to like the court's atmosphere or proceedings, which were not unoften vitiated by the dishonesty or casuistry of pleaders keen to win their cases by any means for the sake of money. He thus returned to his first love—teaching. He established the Brajamohan Institution on 27 June 1884. By 1898 he was able to raise it to a first-grade College, preparing students for the B.A. and B.L. Examinations. On the buildings and equipment alone he spent more than Rs. 35,000. He himself taught English in the College for seventeen years without taking any remuneration.

He was for many years Chairman of the Barisal Municipality, apart from being an influential member of the Local and District Boards.

MORAL REGENERATION

Aswini Kumar always clung to the highest principles of morality in whatever he did. Thus, while steadily building up the Brajamohan College, he had his eye on the moral regeneration of the students who came to study there. Their intellectual awakening, he felt, would be of no worth to society if it did not conduce to their

moral uplift. In addition to living the principles of "truth, love and purity" in his everyday life, which inspired many young men to emulate him, he established the 'Students' Friendly Union' for imparting moral and religious training to all his students. Free from all religious bias or prejudice, the Union platform was open to both the Pandit and the Maulvi for teaching students the best principles of moral life. The result of this endeavour at promoting cohesion and moral uplift was seen in the development of a healthy *esprit de corps* among the students of diverse religious creeds in Barisal. They found in Aswini Kumar's life and thought an undying source of sustenance for their intellectual integrity, moral courage and public spirit.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

By education and temperament Aswini Kumar proved to be the most potent influence in promoting social cohesion and regeneration in Barisal. As far back as 1875, while he was living in Jessore with his father, he, then only a boy of eighteen, zealously endeavoured to promote the cause of amity and cohesion among the Hindus, Muslims and Christians through the *Sadharan Dharma Sabha*, where a European Christian missionary preached his religion side by side with the orthodox Hindu Pandit and the Muhammedan Maulvi.

He promoted the same cause with greater zeal and devotion in Barisal, which, from 1880, became the main centre of his public activity. Members of all castes and creeds in Barisal were equal in his eye. They were steadily made to realize that they were all children of the same mother (the motherland). Aswini Kumar never ceased to practise in his daily life what he preached, and in course of time he, with the help of a band of selfless workers, was able to build up a remarkable sense of cohesion and of belonging among the people of Barisal.

By rendering service to the people in a spirit of self-effacement he inspired thousands in his district to follow in his footsteps. The students of the Brajamohan College were encouraged to organize an association called the 'Little Brothers of the Poor'. They helped the poor and nursed the sick. They also organized a fire brigade to combat the outbreak of fire. These voluntary associations created among the students a wonderful spirit of public service, which elicited praise from high European officials. The relief work done by the Barisal People's

Association under the leadership of Aswini Kumar during the famine of 1906 was an eloquent testimony to this spirit of selfless service.

Aswini Kumar himself often moved from village to village, exhorting Hindus and Muslims to work in cooperation for the welfare of all. And these people, who looked upon him as a demi-god, were always ready to respond to any call for service or sacrifice that might come from him. His tremendous influence over the people of Barisal was clearly seen during the agitation against the Partition of Bengal.

Any good cause, which tended to improve the moral tone of society, received his ungrudging support. He fought the vice of intemperance by wholeheartedly supporting the efforts of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association.

Through popular dramatic presentation dealing with social evils, a strong public opinion came to be created against them everywhere in the district. The dramatic parties (*Jatras*) engaged in this task were mostly sponsored by Aswini Kumar. Encouraged by the revered 'Schoolmaster', Mukunda Das gave a new complexion to these *Swadeshi Jatras* after 1905.

A special society, with Aswini Kumar as its life-President, was set up in Barisal to spread education and sanitation throughout the district. He knew that mass education alone could be the best promoter of sanitary habits among the people.

Always outspoken and truthful, he bitterly detested the hypocrisy of his educated countrymen. As long as they did not shed hypocrisy, he felt that they would not be able to provide society with the elevating and vigorous type of leadership it badly needed. In one of his poems he laid bare the flaws of the Bengalee character. The educated Bengalees were multi-faced. They drove quills and downed brandy, sherry and champagne. They were Brahmos outside but staunch Hindus at home; they were slavish in public but boastful at home. They were given to tall talking and were not ashamed of flinching from hard labour. He thus made it clear that if they wanted to survive, they must be brave and truthful. In other words, it was by sheer force of character that they could hope to liberate their motherland from foreign control.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The Barisal People's Association, formed after the pattern of the Indian Association, became in course of time a handy instrument in the hands of Aswini Kumar to awaken the political consciousness

of the people in the district. Its main purpose was to create a strong public opinion on political matters. Aswini Kumar often gave lectures on its behalf in the villages of Barisal.

He also composed thirty-eight national songs and published them under the title of *Bharat-Geeti* to create a feeling of nationality among the people.

A moderate in his political views, Aswini Kumar advocated, in 1885-86, the necessity of introducing popular councils in the country. More than 40,000 people of Barisal, including many politically-conscious villagers, signed a petition praying for popular councils and sent it to Parliament. Aswini Kumar, who was the guiding force behind the petition, exhibited a copy of it at the Madras session of the Congress in 1887. The main point emphasized in the petition was that popular laws could be made only by popularly-constituted councils.

At the Amraoti session of the Congress in 1897 he boldly criticized the exclusive character of this national organization controlled by the educated few, who had no contact with the masses. To him, every Congress session was a 3-day *tamasha* held in one or the other big city of India. To win the confidence and allegiance of the people, the Congress, he emphasized, should take pains to explain its aims in every village of India. Without popular support, the claims of the Congress appeared to be merely those of a sophisticated few. This speech, which raised the ire of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, showed how outspoken Aswini Kumar was in the advocacy of the cause of popular participation, however indirect it might be, in national matters.

The indifference of the Congress leaders could not dishearten him. He on his own started working among the villagers of Barisal, explaining to them the aims of the Congress. Every lecture of his to the villagers was preceded by the singing of one of his *Bharat-Geeti* songs. That was how he succeeded in creating an informed opinion in Barisal on Congress aims on the one hand and government policy on the other.

His selfless political work among the villagers soon made him the uncrowned king of Barisal. The way he made the people of Barisal follow the path of passive resistance, eschewing violence under all provocative circumstances during the anti-Partition agitation, showed to what heights of greatness the popular leadership of a well-meaning man could rise in any crisis. Despite the repressive policy

of the Government, he continued to hold the view that India, under the aegis of the British Crown, would one day occupy a conspicuous position in the 'Federation of Nations'.

CONCLUSION

The inspirer of the boycott movement in Barisal from 1905, he was deported in 1908. Even after his release in 1910 he continued to be as popular a leader as he was before. Even his greatest enemy, Sir Bamfylde Fuller, had to own that Aswini Kumar "was not one of those who rendered to their country lip-service only". He was not only a popular leader, but a saint as well who voluntarily became the disciple of Bejoy Krishna Goswami, after having leaned for some time towards Keshab Chandra Sen's Brahmoism. His popular religious work entitled *Bhaktiyog* still stands as a clear testimony to his profound scholarship in Hindu culture. Universally appreciated, the work was translated into English, Marathi and Tamil. The friend, guide and philosopher of both the young and the old, of the educated and the uneducated, in Barisal, Aswini Kumar Datta was the born leader of men. And the secret of his success lay in the force of his character. His personality, as opined by Bipin Chandra Pal, was his "greatest contribution to the public life of his country and his time". He passed away in Calcutta on 7 November 1923.

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SITALAKANTA CHATTOPADHYAYA

Son of Kashikanta Chattopadhyaya, Sitalakanta was born in 1856 at Paschimpara in Bikrampur. After passing the Entrance Examination from Dacca, he could not continue his college studies because of illness. But he read voraciously at home and developed a highly intelligent mind. Much later in life—in 1884—he passed the Law Examination from Allahabad in order to practise at the Meerut bar. He was also a renowned journalist, having been associated with Dacca's 'East' and Lahore's 'Tribune'.

A CONSCIOUS REFORMER

He frequently wrote in the *Mahapap Balyabibaha*, the Bengali organ of *Balyabibaha Nibarani Sabha* (Prevention of Child Marriage Society) started by his brother, Nabakanta. He was also a well-known contributor to Dacca's 'East', an English journal.

AWAKENER OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Early in life he was a member of the Dacca Institute and for some time the Assistant Secretary of the Dacca People's Association. He worked seriously to awaken the political consciousness of the people in East Bengal. To create in them patriotic fervour for the cause of the country's political progress, he delivered lectures, on behalf of the Indian Association, in Mymensingh, Sherpur, Assam and other places.

In 1880, he became, on the recommendation of Surendranath Banerjea, the first editor of the 'Tribune', a Lahore journal launched by Sirdar Dayal Singh Majeetia. His fearless criticism of police officials which involved him in a serious court case instituted by the Government, earned him the sobriquet of 'the terror of Punjab'.

Surendranath Banerjea writes in praise of Sitalakanta: "His fearless courage, his penetrating insight into the heart of things, and above all his supreme honesty of purpose... soon placed him in the front rank of those who wielded their pen in the defence of their country's interests". A Brahmo, he died in 1897.

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BIPRADAS PAL CHAUDHURY

Son of Madhusudan Pal Chaudhury, Bipradas Pal Chaudhury was born in 1857 at Maheshgunj in Nadia. He belonged to the rich and powerful zamindar family of Natudaha in Nadia. Educated at the Krishnagar Collegiate School and the Presidency College, from where he passed the F.A. Examination in 1873, he went to England to study Civil Engineering.

ADVOCATE OF SELF-HELP

Bipradas was an advocate of self-help in the field of industrial activity. While working in this field on his own, he seemed to have been inspired by the example set by his stout-hearted and enterprising grandfather, Prankrishna Pal Chaudhury, who not only boldly protested against the European indigo planters' exploitation of the cultivators but also established mechanized looms, flour mills and a tannery to draw the attention of his countrymen to the necessity of practising self-help in the field of industry. Prankrishna even opened a cooperative credit bank in his *zamindari* for the tenants.

Like Prankrishna, Bipradas also desired to see his countrymen become self-supporting through the development of indigenous industries. He himself established a brass factory and a tannery and later earned fame as a Bengalee pioneer in the tea industry, long a monopoly of the Europeans. The factory of his tea estate at Gayabari in Darjeeling was run by hydraulic power.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

He hated caste restrictions which bound society to the past, and gave his daughters in marriage to grooms outside his own caste.

As he considered education to be the most important means of effecting social regeneration, he tried his best to spread it in his estate by founding schools and maintaining them at his own expense.

He died on 25 October 1914 in London, where he had gone for medical treatment.

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BIPIN CHANDRA PAL

The most inspiring preacher of nationalism in the first decade of the twentieth century, Bipin Chandra Pal, son of Ramchandra Pal, was born on 7 November 1858 at Poil in Sylhet. Drawn into the vortex of political and social movements in Calcutta, he had to discontinue his studies at the Presidency College, which he joined after passing the Entrance Examination from the Sylhet Government School in 1874.

His initiation into Brahmoism in 1877 by Sivanath Sastri angered his father into disinheriting him. Thus, forced by circumstances to fend for himself, he worked as headmaster of schools in Cuttack and Bangalore, as Assistant Editor of Lahore's 'Tribune' and, lastly, as Librarian of the Calcutta Public Library. Reconciliation with his father brought him his patrimony but no peace of mind, for he was ever restlessly casting about for means to promote the interests of the country.

In 1898 he went to Oxford on a scholarship to study Comparative Theology. After a year at Oxford, he travelled widely in England, France and America, lecturing on temperance and Hindu theism. It was in America that he came to know of the free world's reluctance to accept Hindu theism or philosophy from India in bondage. After his return to India, he launched on 12 August 1901 the English weekly, *New India*, which within a short time became one of the most powerful organs of Indian nationalism. The national spirit aroused by it was quickened by the 'Bande Mataram', an English daily brought out by him on 6 August 1906 in the midst of the anti-Partition agitation in Bengal.

By his prolific writings and brilliant oratory, to which his Madras speeches of 1907 are the most eloquent testimony, Bipin Chandra made articulate the voice of the nationalists (extremists) in the country. This was very disturbing not only to the Congress moderates but also to the British rulers.

He was imprisoned for six months in 1907-8 for refusing to give evidence against Aurobindo Ghose in the *Bande Mataram* Sedition Case. After his release, he went to England in 1908 and stayed there for three years. He visited England for the third time in 1919 and came back a 'practical-minded' moderate.

In his later life he became an ardent disciple of Pandit Bijay Krishna Goswami, in whose life and teachings he saw the true spiritual genius of India.

A VEHEMENT CRITIC OF BRITISH OPPRESSION

Surendranath Banerjea's inspiring lectures on Mazzini and the Italian Freedom movement, Mr. Annesly's condemnation of Lord Mayo's oppressive rule while defending Amir Khan, the Wahabi leader, before Chief Justice Norman of the Calcutta High Court, and the Indian agitation against the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act of 1878 filled the mind of young Bipin Chandra with an

irrepressible urge for freedom from British oppression. The protection offered to the British feeling of racial superiority in the unjustifiable modification of the Ilbert Bill of 1883 revealed to him the alien rulers' callous disregard of Indian sentiments.

Bipin Chandra's first protest against British oppression was made in connection with the plight of the indentured labourers in the tea gardens of Assam. Both at the Bengal Provincial Conference of 1888 and the Calcutta Congress of 1896 he not only condemned this oppression but also urged the Government to offer adequate protection to the indentured labourers. Subsequently, he wrote in his *New India* (26 August and 11 November 1901, 5 May 1902), strongly defending the measures taken by Mr. Henry Cotton, Chief Commissioner of Assam from 1896 to May 1902, to prevent the oppression of the labourers. Cotton's Assam Immigration Report for 1900 thoroughly exposed the methods adopted by the planters to recruit and oppress the labourers. To end this slavery in the Assam tea gardens, he had appointed Inspectors to bring every case of oppression to the notice of the Government and the law court. The most important suggestion offered by him to check oppression was that the system of indentured labourers should be replaced by free immigration of labour to Assam.

Endorsing the measures and views of Cotton, Bipin Chandra opined that fair treatment of the labour force alone could help the successful management of the tea gardens in Assam. The punishment of some European planters (Hatch, Cattell, Walker, etc.) by courts of law for their cruel treatment of *coolies* was welcomed by Bipin Chandra as a move in the right direction. He praised Cotton for trying to purge his class of the black sheep who were "a menace to the industry".

Cotton's sensible measures came to be attacked by the planters at a meeting on 20 July 1901. The Chairman's call to them for combined action against these measures was, in the opinion of Bipin Chandra, a call to arms. They were on the warpath, because they could not stand any restriction on their unbridled lust and oppression. Nor could they stand any criticism of the low rate of wages paid by them to the *coolies* in distinct violation of the Labour Act. Their agitation, like that of 1883, forced the Government to yield to their desire. Cotton, the author of the widely-read book, *New India*, whose popularity with Indians led to his election as President of the Indian National Congress at its Bombay

Bipin Chandra's strong advocacy of self-government (*Swaraj*), of the boycott of all British goods (*Swadeshi*) save machinery needed to build up a modern national life, of national education and of passive resistance (not to be associated with any revolutionary movement) offered the matrix for the evolution of the country's 'New Spirit', which found eloquent expression in his articles published in the 'Bande Mataram' from 1 October 1906, as well as in his four lectures delivered in Madras in 1907. Mainly instrumental in the adoption of the boycott resolution at the memorable Calcutta meeting of 7 August 1905, he was thankful to Lord Curzon's irrational Partition plan, which not only steeled the resolve of the people to undo the Partition but also sharpened their hunger for *Swaraj*.

BIPIN CHANDRA AND THE CONGRESS

Impulsive by nature and always outspoken in his criticism of the Government's intentions, Bipin Chandra's speech on the Arms Act at the Madras Congress of 1887 made moderate Congressmen raise their eyebrows in fear of British disfavour. But his ardour for the vindication of national honour found a responsive chord in the patriotic hearts of the younger delegates. At the same Congress, he, in co-operation with Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and Mahadev Govinda Ranade, took the initiative in setting up the Subjects Committee in the deliberations of which all Congressmen were welcome to participate. The old and undemocratic practice of allowing the elders only—the chosen few—to determine the subjects of discussion was thus given up.

To Bipin Chandra the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress or the Bengal Provincial Conference were not enough as a means to spread political consciousness among the people in the countryside. To attain this purpose, he suggested (New India, 9 December 1901) that the Congress of 1901 should take the initiative not only in helping the revival of local bodies where they were in existence before, but also in starting new political organizations in every district and subdivision. The district organizations were to correspond to District Boards, and the subdivisional organizations to Local Boards. Provincial Committees of the Congress were asked to send out their agents to organize this work as well as to raise funds. What, however, the Congress needed for purposeful co-operation with district and sub-divisional political organizations all over the country was a definite constitution for itself. Every local

organization also should have a constitution defining its sphere of activity.

Bipin Chandra was not very much in favour of maintaining the British Committee and its organ, *India*, in London, because of the deep dents they made on the coffers of the Congress. Though Dadabhai Naoroji came to their rescue with his own purse, Bipin Chandra preferred the plan of sending Congressmen to England for platform agitation (*New India*, 16 December 1901).

SOCIAL AND MORAL REGENERATION

Bipin Chandra was one of the active workers in the cause of the country's social and moral regeneration. A hater of social prejudices and superstitious customs, including early marriage, he actively promoted widow remarriage and equality between husband and wife in every family. As Joint Secretary of the Sylhet Association in 1880, he did all he could to spread enlightenment among the local people.

As social and moral regeneration of the nation considerably depended on the progress of female education, he was never found wanting in enthusiasm for this cause. When some orthodox critics doubted the usefulness of imparting higher education to women destined to be married, Bipin Chandra at once took up his pen to point out that higher education could never disqualify women for wifely or motherly functions. As a matter of fact, higher education, covering the study of higher mathematics, geography, history and natural sciences, helped women to think and work systematically and to develop both "clearness of mental vision" and "broadness of sympathy". With these sure gains for women from higher education, nothing more was necessary to make them better wives and better mothers, who could undoubtedly be one of the most important means not only of effecting the social and moral regeneration of the nation but also of quickening a new national life among Indians and promoting among them the new patriotism (*New India*, 5 June 1902).

His ideas on national education, steadily developed in his writings and speeches since 1905, were all aimed at reorientating the outlook of the younger generation in such a way as to accelerate the process of the moral and political regeneration of the nation. The recipients of this national education, including technical education, were expected to serve society in a spirit of dedication. They must clearly understand that their education would give them no passport to Government service until the Government became their own. His

ideas were considerably realized in the aims and ideals of the National Council of Education set up in Calcutta in 1906. Seen in perspective, Curzon must again be thanked for impelling Bengalee patriots into executing their ambitious plans of national education, without which the new patriotism, then in spate, would have had to flow along a narrower and less diversified channel.

A brilliant orator and a towering nationalist, Bipin Chandra Pal passed away on 20 May 1932.

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ASUTOSH CHAUDHURI

Son of Durgadas Chaudhuri, Asutosh Chaudhuri was born on 12 June 1860 at Haripur in Pabna. He graduated from the Presidency College in 1880 and took his M.A. Degree also the same year. Then he entered St. John's College at Cambridge, from where he obtained his M.A. Degree in 1885. He also studied Law and returned to Calcutta as a barrister in 1886. A very successful barrister commanding a large and lucrative practice, he was also equally successful as a Judge of the Calcutta High Court from 1912 to 1920. He was a Fellow of the Calcutta University and the founder of the Bengal Landholders' Association.

ADVOCATE OF SELF-RELIANCE

In spite of his very large practice, he took a keen and active interest in all kinds of national activities that tended to promote the political and economic interests of his countrymen. Though a staunch Congressman, he firmly believed that the fulfilment of his countrymen's political aspirations lay, not in begging or extremism, but in consciously developing a spirit of self-reliance. While presiding over

the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Burdwan on 25 June 1904, he remarked: "A subject race has no politics". What his countrymen needed most was industrial progress which, if effected and furthered on their own, was sure to make them self-reliant and averse to begging for political reforms and whimpering about their miserable economic condition.

Technical training for young men capable of helping the development of industries with Indian capital was the basic need of the nation. It was an important means to remove the nation's internal weakness. He promoted this purpose by wholeheartedly helping the Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education set up in Calcutta in 1904.

Another basic necessity of the people for developing their strength was internal unity. And he urged them to promote this much-needed internal unity through *zilla parishads* or district associations, which had to be permanently established all over the country. Mere holding of fleeting political conferences in the districts could not be an effective instrument of promoting unity.

The *Swadeshi* agitation in 1905 came in handy as a means for Asutosh and his compatriots to instill in the Bengalees a patriotic love both for Indian industrial products and the cause of internal unity. He participated in the memorable *Rakhi-bandhan* ceremony at the Federation Hall on 16 October 1905, where he read out the English rendering of the stirring speech of Ananda Mohan Basu. He felt elated to see his countrymen throbbing with a new life and bound together by feelings of unity and self-reliance. The whole situation was so favourable to national activities that, without wasting any time, he issued a call for the formation of the National Council of Education on 16 November 1905. It was time that its scheme were taken off the anvil and given effect to in order to realize the nationalistic aspirations of many patriotic workers, including Satish Chandra Mukherjee. The resultant establishment of the Bengal Technical Institute under the auspices of the Council in 1906 was an unmistakable sign of the growing spirit of self-reliance among the Bengalees. Nothing at that time contained a more hopeful assurance of the country's future than this concerted patriotic endeavour.

As the cultivation of the mother tongue was necessary to strengthen this spirit of self-reliance, he advocated, like Gooroodas Bandyopadhyaya, that all subsidiary subjects for the I.A. and I.Sc. Courses of the University should be taught in Bengali. His own

interest in the development of the Bengali language and its literature came to be deepened with time as a result of his intimate friendship with Rabindranath Tagore.

He passed away on 23 May 1924.

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HEROES OF THE INDIGO DISTURBANCES

The indigo disturbances in Bengal in 1859-60 brought into the limelight the courage of many Hindu and Muslim ryots, who boldly protested against the planters' oppression by refusing to sow indigo any more. What encouraged them to go on strike in the indigo districts was the 'vernacular note' (*rubakari*, dated 20 February 1859) of Ashley Eden, Magistrate of Baraset. This *rubakari*, together with his letter of 17 August 1859, declared that indigo sowing on the part of the ryots was optional. They were free to sow any crop they liked. They were also free to decline all advances from the *sahib* planters. The use of coercionary measures against unwilling ryots was declared illegal.

Excitement and ill-feeling spread further as a result of the imprisonment of sixty ryots in Krishnagar on charges of breaches of contract preferred by planters under Act XI of 1860. The same Act led to the appointment of the Indigo Commission under the presidency of W. S. Seton-Karr. The Commission examined 134 witnesses from 18 May to 4 August 1860. It moved from Calcutta to Krishnagar, where it spent a fortnight hearing witnesses, including prisoners confined for breaches of contract under Act XI of 1860. Its Report throws a flood of light on the courageous protest of the Bengalee witnesses—ryots, zamindars, talukdars, officials and public figures—against the iniquitous system of indigo cultivation carried on in Bengal for a long time by the European planters with the help of British officials in the districts. As can be made out from the evidence of the witnesses, employment of *lathials* and spearmen, knocking down or setting fire to cottages, confinement in factory-godowns, forcible occupation of or encroachment on land, killing cattle, beating

with leather straps (*Shyamchand*), subjection to legal harassment, were some of the means of terrorization frequently used by the rapacious planters to maintain their stranglehold on the poor ryots, already weighed down by the burden of debts and of the advances thrust upon them. Thus the ryots' hatred for the planters was matched by their aversion for indigo, the cultivation of which had ceased to be profitable to them as a result of a rise in the prices of other crops as well as of the "fraudulent computation of their produce".

The spirit of non-cooperation and of rebellion can be read in the evidence tendered before the Commission by the following ryots:

(1) Muddun Mohan Bose of Goaltolli, Nadia, said that ryots would no longer willingly cultivate indigo. If they heard that they would be allowed to pay off their balances in cash, they would all tender the money to clear themselves (A 725).

(2) Nuffur Doss of Locknathpur boldly stated that he had profited nothing during the last 20 years by cultivating indigo on 12 bighas (A 1014). He had been deprived of all profit "by coercion and fraudulent computation of his produce" (A 1025-1026).

(3) Seraj Biswas of Perijpore, Nadia, refused to cultivate indigo, because his "izzut or honour" was taken away. Nowhere did he find redress (A 1133).

(4) Dinu Mandal of Damuhuda categorically stated that he would not cultivate indigo "for anyone on any account" (A 1167).

(5) Jamir Mundal of Joyrampore (Damuhuda thannah) said that he could not cultivate indigo, because he had his "honour to look after" (A 1181).

(6) Dukhi Sheikh of Damuhuda refused to sow in 1860, no matter what the consequences might be (A 1194).

(7) Hadji Mulla, connected with the Nischindipore concern said that he was "not willing to sow even on fresh terms" (A 1215). He made it clear that he would go to another country and would "rather beg than sow indigo" for anyone (A 1216).

(8) Kadamulla of Badamtalla, connected with the Nischindipore concern, point-blank stated that he would not sow any more (A 1226).

(9) Kulin Mundal of Mirpore thannah gave a similar reply (A 1253). He, together with others who had come to Calcutta to meet the Commission, stayed at the Printing Press of Harish Chandra Mukherjee (A 1242).

(10) Bhikoo Mundal, connected with the Locknathpur concern, said that he would not sow indigo any more, because he got no profit from it (A 1234-1235).

(11) Juran Mundal of Ramkistopore refused to sow in 1860, after he had heard of the order making sowing voluntary on the part of the ryot (A 1261). He stayed in the garden of Rada Mullick (A 1260).

(12) Alam Biswas of Jessore said that he did not sow in 1860, as everyone else had resolved not to (A 1392). He made it clear that he would not sow under oppression (A 1399).

(13) Islam Mundal of Khaskharra, Nadia, said that he would rather pay the damages than sow (A 1420).

(14) Manik Shah of Nadia, who did not sow in 1860, expressed that sowing indigo was "a dead loss" (A 1506).

(15) Gadu Biswas of Nadia refused to sow indigo on any account (A 1519).

(16) Kadir Biswas of Bidamari expressed his unwillingness to sow even on fair terms (A 1620).

(17) Abu Jotedar of Nadia refused to sow together with others (A 1622).

(18) Burgatulla of Nadia also gave a similar reply (A 1759 and A 1760).

(19) Ishwar Chandra Chowdari, a talukdar of Baradee in Pabna, said that he did not like to sow indigo, because he was a respectable man (A 1777). If he talked of indigo to his dependent ryots, they ran away to another village (A 1782).

(20) Amir Biswas of Baraset said that he had stopped sowing indigo because of oppression, which affected his tobacco lands (A 1790).

(21) Adum Mundal of Daripara, Pabna, was confined in the factory godown because he refused to sign a 10-year contract. He escaped and came to Calcutta to give evidence before the Commission (A 2317).

(22) Jadu Biswas of Nadia did not sow after hearing that sowing had become optional under the order of a *sahib*. Oppression also steeled his resolve not to sow indigo any more (A 2327).

(23) Biswanath Ghose of Nadia did not sow indigo in 1860, because he could not afford to neglect rice cultivation any longer (A 2338 and A 2339).

(24) Tilok Paramanik of Pabna had suffered so much that he point-blank refused to cultivate indigo in future (A 2356).

(25) Minu Sheikh of Nadia refused to sow in 1860 under oppression (A 2363).

(26) Sabir Biswas of Nadia declared that on no terms, not even if he were given a hundred rupees, would he be willing to sow indigo henceforth (A 2376).

(27) Mirza Mundal of Nadia, who was sued for breach of contract because of his refusal to sow in 1860, declared that he could not stand oppression any longer (A 2377 and A 2378).

(28) Dudh Mullick of Bondabill, Nadia, preferred to be in debt to the *mahajan*, who gave him to eat, rather than sow for anyone (A 2502).

(29) Shadu Sheikh of Binudpore, Nadia, declared that he would not sow indigo in future even on fair terms for anyone (A 2517).

(30) Ram Charan Biswas of Nadia declared that he refused to sow when he came to know in October 1859 that the Company had nothing to do with indigo cultivation (A 2525).

(31) Chaitan Mundal of Durgapore, Nadia, gave almost a similar reply (A 2533).

(32) Karim Biswas of Ramkistopore told the Commission that he did not sow in 1860 because of oppression (A 2877), and that he would not sow in future even if he got back his cattle (A 2884).

(33) Mandari Biswas of Baghberia, Nadia, said that he had stopped sowing 6 years ago owing to oppression (A 3043). None in his village, he pointed out, sowed any indigo as a result of a dispute which led to the injury of a cultivator (A 3047).

(34) Buddun Mundal of Kutia Chandpore (Nadia) was imprisoned for stopping sowing from April 1860 (A 3049). He said that he would not sow even after his release (A 3053).

(35) Nussi Joardar of Soli Taka (Nadia), who lost his stand against the charge of breach of contract and was sent to prison, said that he preferred begging to sowing indigo after his release (A 3199).

(36) Jalal Mullick of Khanpore, Jessore, stood up to the harassment of Mr. Larmour and refused to pay any increased rent (A 3202).

(37) Zirabdi Karigur of Chota Andula (Nadia) stopped

sowing on hearing that there was a Government *perwanna* making indigo-cultivation optional. He took no notice of the suit for breach of contract against him (A 3210). He also made it clear that he would not sow next season because of continuing oppression. The *sahibs* had cut down his date trees and had stood in the way of his sowing 'long pepper' (A 3212).

(38) Panju Mulla of Arpara (Nadia) said that he would rather be killed with bullets and have his throat cut than sow indigo (A 3214).

(39) Andai Kulhu of Ramkistopore, who was imprisoned for breach of contract, preferred to be in jail rather than sow indigo (A 3220).

(40) Astul Mundal, who was in Krishnagar jail, declared that he would not sow even after his release. The system was too oppressive for him to bear any longer (A 3230). He disclosed that he, together with others in jail, was promised release if he would sow a little indigo. Spurning this offer, he said: "We would rather be killed with bullets than sow again" (A 3229).

(41) Sikundar Mundal of Baniapookur (Nadia), who was sued for breach of contract for not sowing (A 3280), made it clear that he would not sow any more (A 3282).

(42) Joy Chand Paul Chowdari, a zamindar of Ranaghat (Nadia), pointed out that for the last 20 years the ryots were unwilling to sow indigo for the planters, because they were made to work under oppression (A 174 and A 186). This oppressive system did not allow them to cultivate other crops, which assured them a profit of 50 to 100 per cent. For the sake of the ryots he refused to grant a *putni* "now and then" to the planters (A 187-188).

(43) Bijoyo Govinda Chowdhari, zamindar of Pabna, who resented official protection for the illegal acts of the European planters of the Bhowdanga factory (A 1589), refused to renew the lease of his land to the Belnabari concern even if the full rent were paid (A 1592).

(44) Munshi Latafat Hossain, zamindar of Sura (24-Parganas), condemned the system of 'advances' which tied the ryots to indigo (A 1747-1748).

(45) Mohesh Chunder Chatterjee, a zamindar of Gosain Durgapore (Nadia), boldly stated that too much of "compulsion" made the ryots dislike indigo (A 3521).

(46) Gopal Pal Chowdari, a rich and public-spirited zamindar

of Ranaghat (Nadia), condemned before the Commission the inequality between Indian and European offenders in the eye of the law in the country. For the same offence a zamindar would be imprisoned, while a European would be merely fined. This distinction became all the more intolerable to him because of official support for the planters. He stated: "If an assistant planter who holds a lease from us is summoned into a court, he will get a chair near the Magistrate, while we, the zamindars, who created the lease, will have to stand at a distance" (A 3551). He bought the Sisidia concern (later called the Ranaghat concern) at the request of the ryots who did not want to fall into the hands of European planters (A 3553). He made it clear that indigo cultivation was no longer paying (A 3552).

(N.B.—He did much for the improvement of the Krishnagar College as well as of the roads and sanitary arrangements of Ranaghat.)

(47) Pran Kristo Pal Chowdari of Latoohada (Nadia) said that he had refused to renew the lease of his lands to Nischindipore, Loknathpore and Khalbolia concerns in April 1860, because of the unwillingness of the ryots to work in them (A 3559—A 3661).

(48) Joy Kissen Mookerjee (Jay Krishna Mookerjee), an enlightened zamindar of Uttarpura (Hooghly), said that the ryots would be glad if the cultivation of indigo were discontinued. The whole system had become too oppressive and unprofitable for them to put up with any longer (A 3813). Joy Kissen refused the applications of *sahibs* for lease of land in his *zamindari*, because he did not want the latter to increase their cultivation in a manner wholly prejudicial to the interests of the ryots. More land for them, he felt, might help them to acquire more influence, which had already become fearful because of their being "always favoured by the Courts" (A 3816).

(See the separate sketch on Jay Krishna Mookerjee.)

(49) Umesh Chandra Roy, zamindar of Santipur (Nadia), openly criticized the manner in which the Bengal Indigo Company under Mr. Larmour continued to cultivate on his land even after the expiry of its lease. The institution of proceedings against the Company under Act IV of 1840 had no effect, because Mr. Elliot, the Joint Magistrate, shamelessly sided with the European planter (A 3898). He concluded: "I think that until all sorts of oppression be stopped, and until a higher price be offered for the bundles, the ryots won't sow" (A 3908).

Magistrates belonged to neither of these classes. Lastly, without the sanction of the Legislative Council their appointment was highly irregular. Thus, it was suggested by him on behalf of the Committee of the British Indian Association that a Bill be introduced in the Legislative Council for enabling the Local Government "to vest persons of property and station in the Mofussil with powers but without the emoluments of Magistrates, and to make provision for their removal in cases of misconduct" (Indigo Commission Report, 1860—Appendix No. 25).

(N.B.—Iswar Chandra Singha, the brother of Raja Pratap Chandra Singha and the adopted son of Raja Narayan Singha of Paikpara, was an enthusiastic patron of Bengali theatricals as well as of poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt. He died in 1862.)

(54) Bishnucharan Biswas and (55) Digambar Biswas of Chaugacha in Jessore, as described by Shishir Kumar Ghosh (himself a great hero of this episode) in his 'A Story of Patriotism in Bengal', were two great martyrs to the cause of the indigo ryots. Moved by the mounting distress and sufferings of the ryots, they threw away their dewanships in indigo factories belonging to the Katgarah concern and went through villages, exhorting the oppressed ryots to combine against the planters. The personal risks and expenses involved in the campaign they had launched could not deter them from pursuing their stern resolution to break the stranglehold of the planters on the ryots. On the other hand, the planters also, owning greater resources, prepared to break up the combination of the ryots who had struck work.

As Chaugacha was the stronghold of the power of the Biswases, the planters attacked it with their men. Bishnucharan and Digambar, supported by their Barisal *lathials*, resisted until they were overwhelmed by the planters' superior forces. They fled but were not cowed. Wherever they went under cover of darkness they lit the spirit of revolt. And to sustain this spirit they spent about Rs. 17,000 in bearing the legal expenses of the ryots prosecuted by the planters in courts of law as well as in maintaining the families of those sent to jail. No sacrifice on their part was considered too great by them for the cause they had espoused. As torch-bearers of freedom from oppression, they offered new hopes to despairing hearts in the country. The closure of the Katgarah concern, as a result of the refusal of the ryots to sow indigo for over a year, was an achieve-

ment of the new spirit created among the oppressed by Bishnucharan and Digambar.

(56) Mathuranath Bhattacharya, zamindar of Sadhuhati (Nadia), took up the cause of the ryots in protest against the tyrannical acts of George Macnair, Superintendent of the Sindhuria and Joradaha concerns. After a fight between the two parties, the ryots, led by Mathuranath, burnt down and looted the houses of many persons working for the planters. The situation would have become worse had not Macnair personally visited Mathuranath and entreated him to pacify the ryots.

(57) Sreehari Roy, zamindar of Chandipur, set an inspiring example by leading the rebellious ryots of Chuadanga in Nadia against the planters.

The *second phase of the indigo trouble* was seen during the eighteen-eighties in the northern part of Jessore. At the root of the recrudescence of this trouble were two causes: first, the oppression practised by Durup De Dambal, Superintendent of the Bijalia Factory, and Mr. Selby of the Nowhatta concern; second, the refusal of the ryots to sow indigo, as jute cultivation had become more profitable.

(58) Banka Behari Mitra, zamindar of Sashtibar, and his brother, (59) Basanta Kumar Mitra, led the disaffected ryots in their attack upon De Dambal. The trouble spread to Binodpur, where De Dambal was connected with the Ramnagar and Babukhali concerns. Mr. Hewling Luson, Joint-Magistrate of Jhenada, who became a willing instrument of oppression in the hands of the planters, made the life of the ryots miserable by denying them justice in his court. The pressure of public criticism ultimately led to his transfer to Berhampore in 1890.

Some more respectable men came forward in support of the cause of the oppressed ryots. They were (60) Kedarnath Ghosh of Uruba, (61) Asutosh Gangopadhyaya, (62) Priyanath Mukhopadhyaya and (63) Purna Chandra Chattopadhyaya (pleader) of Ghullia, (64) Bisveswar Mukhopadhyaya (editor of *Kalyani*) of Narayanpur and (65) Bhupendra Kumar Roy (zamindar) of Narail.

(66) Jadunath Majumdar, M.A., B.L., came forward to defend the ryots prosecuted by the planters in the Jhenada Court, while (67) Purna Chandra Chattopadhyaya did the same in the Magura Court. That apart, Jadunath and Purna Chandra sent a Memorial to England with the help of Surendranath Banerjea. Mr. Charles

Bradlaugh, M.P., raised the issue in the House of Commons. The agitation led to the appointment of a Three-man Arbitration Committee by the Government of Bengal. While the Government and the planters were represented by Alexander Smith and T. Tweedie respectively, the ryots were represented by Jadunath Majumdar. As a result of the Committee's Report, the price of indigo cultivated by the ryots was raised. Finding this unprofitable, planters began to sell off their concerns. Indigo production was made all the more unprofitable by the discovery in Germany of what is known as the aniline dye. Indigo ceased to be a source of trouble after 1895.

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UPADHYAYA BRAHMABANDHAB

Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyaya, well known to his countrymen as Upadhyaya Brahmabandhab, is one of the most colourful personalities in the early history of Bengal's revolutionary movement. Son of Debi Charan Bandyopadhyaya, Bhavani Charan was born on 11 February 1861 at Khanyan in the Hooghly district. After passing the Entrance Examination, he was drawn into the vortex of regenerative activities in society on account of which he had to give up his studies in college. His untiring quest for the truth in religion led him to embrace Brahmoism in 1887 and Roman Catholicism in 1891. He, however, returned to Hinduism as a penitent towards the end of his life. He retraced his steps under the irresistible influence of the Vedantic principles, which his friend, Swami Vivekananda, had successfully propagated abroad. Inspired by the greatness of the Vedanta he went to England as a preacher in November 1902. During his stay there up to June 1903, he delivered some illuminating lectures on Hindu thought and theism at Oxford and Cambridge.

As a dedicated teacher, he was associated with many schools, including the Union Academy at Hyderabad in Sind and the *Saraswat Ayatan* in Calcutta. A journalist with a purpose, he edited many journals, the most notable of which were 'Sophia', 'The Twentieth Century' (1901), *Sandhya* (1904) and *Swaraj* (1907).

A PATRIOTIC LOVER OF INDIAN CULTURE

Despite his conversion to Christianity, he maintained his roots in the culture of his forbears. He called himself a 'Hindu Catholic'. As a Catholic *sannyasi*, he not only wore the saffron dress of the Hindu *sannyasis*, but also assumed the name of Upadhyaya Brahmbandhu in December 1894. Roman Catholicism could not change his way of life, nor could it completely wean him away from the cultural heritage of his country. On the contrary, his mind, failing to get the spiritual sustenance it wanted from Christianity, became increasingly inclined towards Vedantism, which he had once treated with scorn. His deep study of the Hindu scriptures and his unhappy experience of the exclusive life of the Christians in India led to his emergence in 1901 as a staunch champion of Vedantism and Indian culture. His writings in 'The Twentieth Century', criticizing the Christians for their exclusiveness, enraged the Catholics. He created a greater stir by emphasizing in an article published in the *Bangadarsan*, the need of his countrymen to avoid Anglicization if they wanted to maintain the identity of their great culture, which alone correctly reflected the genius of their country. If Hindus took to Europeanization, they would pave the way not only for the extinction of their own culture but also of themselves as a race.

That Christianity could not prosper in India because of its exclusiveness was made clear by him in one of his speeches in England. His letters from England, where he had gone as a Vedantic preacher, clearly reflected his dislike for the European way of life. Nor could he reconcile himself to the Western idea of female freedom which, as he observed, had an unsettling effect on domestic life in England. To him, the Hindu way of life was always preferable.

With time his love of the Hindu way of life came to be distinctly tinged with nationalistic sentiments. On the eve of the Partition of Bengal he roared through the columns of his daily *Sandhya*, forbidding his countrymen to imitate the English. As patriotic Bengalees, they must never cease to be true Hindus and never forget for a moment their national identity. Small wonder if every fibre in the being of this patriot revolted against the *firingbees* and made him return from the Christian Church to the fold of Hinduism, penitent but yet proud!

A NATIONALIST TEACHER

Brahmbandhab wanted young men to combine in themselves both brain and brawn. Like Vivekananda, he believed in the necessity

of having a sound mind in a sound body. To promote this purpose he joined as a Sanskrit teacher the 'Eagle's Nest' in Calcutta, which in 1886 came to be called the 'Concord Club'. It aimed at promoting the physical, moral and intellectual regeneration of the youths in the country. Under its auspices debates were held, the knowledge of history, political science and philosophy was spread, and physical exercises taught. It had its own magazine, the 'Concord', which was edited by Brahmabandhab's uncle, the Rev. Kali Charan Banerjee. The Maharaja of Cooch Behar was its patron, and W. W. Hunter, its President. But, unfortunately, the Club had to be closed down in 1887 for want of money.

Education to Brahmabandhab was the best means of maintaining the identity of Indian culture. This education must always be kept free from the warping or inhibiting influence of foreign culture. In 1901, he boldly criticized Lord Curzon for trying to clamp down official control on the system of education obtaining in the country. This new system, he felt, would destroy Indian culture and the growing sense of nationalism in the country. Indians must be allowed to shape their own system of education in such a way as to make it conducive to the promotion of Hindu thought and Hindu ideal in their society. As a matter of fact, he had been propagating this idea in a militant manner since the publication of his article entitled "European Dominion" in 'Sophia' on 18 August 1900. He wrote: "The insurrection that we advocate is against the ascendancy of European thought over Hindu thought. . . . Without the emancipation of our national thought from the foreign yoke, the regeneration and elevation of India will be an impossible task". It was through self-assertion that educated Indians could safeguard their culture against foreign interference and domination.

In 'The Twentieth Century' of September 1901 he developed the idea further. Indians must, he wrote, "throw off the English yoke in matters of education". They must erect universities of their own "where the European ideal must be made subservient to Hindu thought". He made it clear that European ideal must no more be allowed "to play the dominant part in the education of our youths".

A man of action, he set about the task of giving his idea a concrete form. In September 1901, he established a small residential school at Simla in Calcutta with a view to imparting education to students according to Vedic ideals. His zeal for the cause led him to

help Rabindranath Tagore in establishing a *Brahmacharya Vidyalaya* on Vedic ideals at Bolpur in December 1901. In August 1902, Brahmabandhab was inspired by Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, a great patriot in his own right, to establish in Calcutta another school on national lines, called the *Saraswat Ayatan*. Its influence on the younger generation as well as on the patriots became very much noticeable from 1906 when serious attempts were made to set up national institutions free from all official control.

The University of Calcutta, which was made to subserve, under official control, the interests of the Government since 1902, was scornfully termed by Brahmabandhab as "*Gol-dighi's* house of slavery".

THE FREEDOM FIGHTER

While in his teens, Brahmabandhab believed more in the sword than in the pen as a means of liberating India from British rule. Ananda Mohan Basu could not then convince him of the need to adopt constitutional means to further India's cause of freedom. Young Brahmabandhab decided to join the army of Gwalior for military training. Thwarted in this purpose, he gradually veered round to the necessity of employing constitutional means in the struggle with the British. He began to believe from December 1901 that by applying constitutional and moral pressure the British could be made to govern Indians through the counsels of their representatives.

But circumstances forced him to become increasingly hostile and militant to the British rulers. His daily, *Sandhya*, lashed out in rage against the *firinghees*, particularly after the Partition of Bengal in 1905. It gave a militant character to the *Swadeshi* movement and a sharper edge to the boycott of British goods in Bengal. An undaunted votary of freedom, he launched another nationalist weekly, *Swaraj*, in March 1907. These two journals succeeded, under his unfailing guidance and inspiration, in whipping up widespread enthusiasm in the country for the cause of unity and freedom.

The militant spirit of Brahmabandhab was too much for the rulers to tolerate. They had the *Sandhya* closed by bringing a sedition case against it in August 1907. The strain of the trial aggravated the ailment from which Brahmabandhab had been suffering for a long time. He died on 27 October 1907, after undergoing an operation at the Campbell Medical Hospital. The patriot was gone, but not his

revolutionary spirit, which became an undying source of inspiration to thousands of fearless hearts bent on undoing the Partition.

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AKSHAY KUMAR MAITRA

Son of Mathuranath Maitra, Askhay Kumar Maitra was born at Simla in Nadia on 1 March 1861. The ideal character always held up before him by his father was Akshay Kumar Datta. After receiving his preliminary education at Harinath Majumdar's school at Kumarkhali, Askhay Kumar entered the Boalia School in Rajshahi and creditably passed the Entrance Examination from there in 1878. In 1880, he passed the F.A. Examination from the Rajshahi College; in 1883, the B.A. Examination from Presidency College; and, in 1885, the B.L. Examination from the Rajshahi College. The same year he joined the Rajshahi bar.

A PATRIOTIC BIOGRAPHER

Akshay Kumar made his mark as a critical writer of historical biographies, published in journals like *Sadhana*, *Bharati*, *Sahitya* and *Aitihāsik Chitra*, the last named being a quarterly edited by him in 1899. A distinctly patriotic motive and the zeal for unravelling the truth underlay all his painstaking endeavours at reconstructing historical characters of Bengal and Rajputana. His *Samar Singha*, *Sirajuddaula*, *Rani Bhavani*, *Sitaram Rai* and *Mir Kasim* (this was published in 1906) were as much a source of inspiration to his awakened countrymen as his depiction of the pristine glory of 'Gauda under the Hindus' in 1902.

Though, subsequently, his detailed history of Gauda brought him fame as a reliable researcher and iconographer, it was, however, his biography of *Sirajuddaula* (1898), which made him very popular with the patriots of Bengal. As a matter of fact, its influence proved to be far-reaching in providing fuel for the fire of patriotism in Bengal. He was the first historian to attempt the rehabilitation of the character of Sirajuddaula by questioning the veracity of Holwell's Narrative about the Black Hole tragedy of 20 June 1756. That the Holwell monument, first built in 1760 by Holwell at his own cost, perpetuated a "gigantic hoax"—a colossal lie—was the view expressed by Akshay Kumar in his *Sirajuddaula*. It was thoroughly exposed by Akshay Kumar and J. H. Little at a special debate of the Calcutta Historical Society on 24 March 1916, presided over by the Rev. W. K. Firminger. In point of time the proceedings of the debate are outside the scope of this study, but it must be admitted that the scholarly paper read by Akshay Kumar was the crowning piece of his endeavour begun in 1898 to prove that Holwell, who was known as "a clever rascal in his own day", had built his monument on a downright falsehood—on a fabricated tragedy which found no mention either in the public records for nearly two years since June 1756 or in the works of the contemporary Mahommedan historians. Because of Holwell's mendacity and of his countrymen's tendentious eagerness to denigrate Sirajuddaula, the people of Bengal had no opportunity to appreciate either the generosity of the young Nawab or the bravery of those Englishmen who laid down their lives while fighting the Nawab's forces from the besieged Fort William.

The monument, which did no justice to the English sense of history, never ceased to excite the anger of the Indian patriots, including even Netaji Subhas Chandra Basu, against the British authorities. And that at the root of this agitation was the great work of Akshay Kumar Maitra, none in this country will ever doubt.

As Secretary of the Rajshahi Education Committee, Akshay Kumar did his best to arouse the interest of his countrymen in the national literature that was steadily growing in volume with time. He was also the Secretary of the Rajshahi District Association, which, like its counterparts in other districts, tried to make the local people politically conscious.

Though the literature and the history of Bengal claimed most of his attention, he found time to work for the promotion of the welfare of Rajshahi as a member of both its Municipality and District Board.

Associated with the Asiatic Society, the *Barendra Anusandhan Samiti* and the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, he died on 10 February 1930.

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Prince of poets in modern India, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 and a versatile genius in history, Rabindranath Tagore, son of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and grandson of Dwarkanath Tagore, was born on 7 May 1861 at Jorasanko in Calcutta. Temperamentally averse to the traditional methods of learning, he skipped from school to school—the Oriental Seminary, the Normal School, the Bengal Academy—before going to England in 1878 for better English education with the ultimate aim of becoming a barrister. But Destiny willed it otherwise. The cultural atmosphere at home, sustained and enriched as much by the high ideals and the best thought of ancient India as by the rationalism of the West, helped the burgeoning of his poetical genius, while steadily drawing him away from the rut of the prescribed, matter-of-fact course of school or college study. Those who influenced him most in his early life were his father and his talented brothers, the chief among whom was Jyotirindranath. And the journals which enabled him to sharpen his pen and to develop an unparalleled fluency of style in Bengali were *Bharati*, *Sadhana*, *Nabaparjay* *Bangadarshan* and *Bhandar*.

Well versed in the ancient lore of India, he was the culmination of the nineteenth century renaissance in Bengal. He was at the same time one of the most unwavering promoters of his countrymen's social and political regeneration. It would be no exaggeration to say that he was one of the spiritual fathers of the freedom movement in India.

Widely-read both in India and abroad, his works have today become the treasure-house of mankind.

SELF-RELIANCE AND POLITICAL REGENERATION

His father's and his brothers' patriotic fervour, which found eloquent expression in their great regard for the Indian way of life free from all prejudices and parochialism, instilled in him not only a deep and abiding love for his country and its culture, but also a profound sympathy for the political aspirations of his fallen and downtrodden countrymen. With time these traits in his character became so increasingly pronounced in his writings and activities that they could not fail to be a source of inspiration to his countrymen engaged in the concerted endeavour of binding the country by a feeling of nationality. It was, therefore, not surprising that young Rabindranath, who as a lad of fourteen feelingly recited his national song at the *Hindu Mela* of 1875 to the admiration of his audience, would grow into a towering national poet, steadying and guiding by his thought and action the faltering steps of his countrymen towards a new life, far nobler and bolder than what it had been before.

Rabindranath firmly believed that without self-respect and self-reliance it would be difficult for his countrymen to make any progress towards political regeneration. Self-respect would grow among Bengalees if they ceased to take insults from Europeans lying down and were capable of self-defence. Writing in 1894 against the gross misdemeanour of Beatson-Bell, Magistrate of Khulna, towards a Bengalee clerk, he opined that if Bengalees could defend themselves against manhandling at the hands of Europeans, they would be setting an example of self-defence, which was bound to boost up their sense of self-respect and of self-reliance. If they were struck by European bullies, they must also courageously strike back.

It was this same message of self-help and self-reliance that he delivered to his countrymen at the memorable Town Hall meeting of 25 August 1905 held in protest against the proposed Partition of Bengal. He encouraged the *Swadeshi* or boycott movement, because it tended to promote the spirit of self-reliance among the Bengalees.

For the sake of self-respect and self-reliance Bengalees were asked by him to discard the habit of addressing political meetings in English. The constant use of the English language by Bengalee agitators in conducting the business of their meetings from 1878 to 1883 gave him the impression that the only aim behind their agitation was to awaken the Government, not the masses, to the necessity of

introducing reforms. Such agitation, without mass support, was nothing but political begging. To secure mass support for every agitation and every petition, leaders should address meetings in simple Bengali, explaining their political aims and ideas to the ordinary people.

Rabindranath became aware of the need to use Bengali in political meetings while attending the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca in 1898. In the same year he vehemently criticized the seemingly patriotic zamindars for participating in a series of agitations with their eyes turned to the English. The language they used was English, the methods of agitation adopted by them were those of the English people and even their publicity was done in English. By their attachment to the foreign tongue, they isolated themselves from the people. Their patriotism thus lacked depth and sincerity. They could make themselves truly useful to the country only when they came close to the masses in connection with every movement through the use of Bengali.

UNITY AND POLITICAL REGENERATION

Lack of unity between Hindus and Muslims had been the bane of India's freedom. This was fully exploited by the British to strengthen their hold on India. The religious fanaticism of the Muslims provided the alien rulers with the means to keep them away from the Congress dominated by the Hindus. It was on Hindu-Muslim differences that the British policy of divide and rule thrived. Hindus and Muslims must thus unite, for in their unity lay not only the strength of their country but also the means of securing redress of their grievances. He had this end in view when he suggested, on 25 August 1905, that the anti-Partition agitation should be under the joint leadership of a Hindu and a Muslim, whose orders would be unquestioningly carried out by the people.

The ceremonial seal on the bond of unity came to be put by Rabindranath when he proclaimed on the *Rakhi-bandhan* day, celebrated at the Federation Hall under the presidency of Ananda Mohan Basu on 16 October 1905, that Bengalees, both Hindus and Muslims, living in the separated parts of Bengal, were blood brothers, whose sense of oneness would be strengthened by their common sorrow and suffering stemming from the iniquitous Partition.

The divide and rule policy of the British should not make Indians doubt the existence of national unity in the country. That it existed

was proved by the traditional endeavour of Indians to highlight the truth of unity in variety. It was also proved by the manner in which Bengalees and Marathas united to offer homage to the memory and ideals of Sivaji the Great.

LEADERSHIP AND REGENERATION

The political and social regeneration of the country considerably depended on the character of the leader. Rabindranath pointed out in 1893 that the leader must be a man who would not run after fame and live in studied isolation from the people. He must be above all temptations. Knowledge would be his shield, and simplicity his helmet.

Rabindranath condemned royal receptions for leaders and delegates at any political conference. The royal reception given to delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca in 1898 was scornfully described by him as the bridegroom's reception. It tended to affect the simplicity of the leaders and to keep them away from the people.

PATRIOTISM AND POLITICAL REGENERATION

Rabindranath identified true patriotism with sincere love of the country—its people, its culture, its natural beauty as well as its squalor, its rivers and villages. This love must be so deep and sincere that no sacrifice, not even the sacrifice of one's life, must be deemed too much for the sake of the country's overriding interests. There must be no room for cowardice or fear of suffering in an Indian heart that was truly patriotic. The success of the cause of political regeneration considerably depended on the development of this kind of patriotism among the people.

THE BASIS OF POLITICAL REGENERATION

In July 1904 Rabindranath confidently expressed the belief that India's political progress depended on the social, economic and cultural regeneration of her villages. And while reconstructing village life, no Government aid, even in the form of legislation, should be sought by the voluntary workers. Mass awakening, he said, was bound to come in the wake of the progress of village reconstruction work. Together with it would also come greater understanding and cohesion among the villagers, both rich and poor, Hindus and Muslims. To hasten the growth of this understanding and unity, he suggested the holding of *melas* (agricultural and industrial exhibitions) in villages

from time to time. At these *melas* lectures on sanitation and other subjects would be delivered in simple Bengali.

NATIONAL EDUCATION AND PROGRESS

Rabindranath believed that education spread through the medium of Bengali would not only foster original thought among the Bengalees but also conduce to the establishment of a close and harmonious relationship between their thinking and work, both at home and outside. Linguistic imitation would not only harm Bengali literature, but also retard the mental development of Bengali boys and girls. To rectify the situation, he advocated in 1893 the introduction of the study of the Bengali language and its literature in Calcutta University's colleges.

A vehement critic of Curzon's Universities Act of 1904, he exhorted his countrymen to take up the task of imparting national education on national lines with a view to rescuing their rich cultural heritage from contempt. Its ultimate aim would be to spread knowledge among young men, not to qualify them for Government service. Those who came to receive it would do so in a spirit of dedication. Addressing the members of the Dawn Society on 7 and 10 November 1905, he urged them not to abandon the cause of national education even if the Government withdrew in future the Carlyle and Risley Circulars. As a matter of fact, the institution founded by him at Bolpur in 1901 spoke eloquently of his idea about national education.

SOCIAL REGENERATION

To Rabindranath, the first pre-requisite of social regeneration was the abandonment of the habit of imitating English manners, customs and institutions in the name of progress. Such imitation had not reduced the area of difference between the Indians and the English.

Rabindranath was not opposed to accepting healthy ideas from the West. To have a liberal mind, not warped by imitation, was good. What, however, came to be stressed by him was the need to revive the great Hindu ideals of the past. He stated in 1901 that unless Indians learnt to be completely themselves or tried to retrieve their cultural identity, they would not be able to project to the West the true image of their own country. The same idea was further developed by him at the Tripura Sahitya Sanmilani in July 1905.

Simplicity had always been the most prepossessing feature of Indian life. This had to be preserved.

Rabindranath was not in favour of effecting any social reform by legislation. The Age of Consent Bill of 1891 was distasteful to him. He maintained that this legislation against early marriage was unnecessary, since changing economic conditions tended to discourage this practice among the young intelligentsia.

ECONOMIC SELF-HELP

His view on Lord Elgin's imposition of an excise duty of 5 per cent on Indian manufactured yarns of the counts "20's or above" was marked by the idea of self-help. The decision to levy this countervailing excise duty on Indian yarns was taken after the Government had imposed, with a view to balancing its budget, an import duty on Manchester textile goods. Some members of the Viceroy's Council, including Mohini Mohan Roy and Fazulbhai Vishram, pointed out that the Government could expect very little revenue from the proposed countervailing excise duty. Indian agitators in general prayed in vain for exemption from duty of Indian yarn up to count 24.

The agitators' whimper about the levy was repugnant to Rabindranath. He urged Indian manufacturers to improve their manufacturing methods with a view to bringing down the prices of their products within the purchasing power of their poor countrymen. Manufacturers should be aware of the proneness of poor Indian buyers for cheap goods, no matter whether they were foreign or Indian.

The second remedy of the situation suggested by him was that Indian agitators should mount increasing pressure on the Government to force it to maintain balance between revenue and expenditure in its budget.

THE MIGHTY PROTESTER

Rabindranath never flinched from the duty of protesting against the arbitrary acts of the Government whenever occasion demanded it. He was outspoken in his condemnation of Elliott's Jury Notification of 20 October 1892, which abolished the jury system in Bengal. The Notification was, however, withdrawn in April 1893 under public pressure.

The Police Amendment Act of February 1895, which made the

inhabitants of a village, be they guilty or innocent, bear the cost of a punitive police when any disturbance had occurred or was apprehended in their village, came in for severe criticism not only in the Viceroy's Council but also at the hands of Rabindranath, particularly during the anti-Partition agitation.

Rabindranath boldly criticized Curzon's Convocation Address of 15 February 1902, in which Indians, particularly the Vernacular Press, were accused of exaggeration.

The extravagance of the Delhi Durbar of 1 January 1903, held at a time when famine was stalking the country, was as much shocking to the patriotic poet as the servility of the native princes, who were led by their Political Agents into the Durbar Hall to offer their *salaam* to the representative of the British Crown.

Rabindranath's protest against the Partition of Bengal was actually a full-blooded condemnation of the autocracy of Curzon. To the boycotters of foreign goods his stirring patriotic songs were an inexhaustible source of inspiration. He took part in the memorable meetings of 25 August and 16 October 1905, and asked the Bengalees to unite not only against their oppressors but also in their task of reconstructing the villages. They were asked to draw inspiration from the fact that the greater the oppression the stronger would become their will to achieve emancipation. His *Bijoy Sanmilani* speech of November 1905 carried the most stirring message about the oneness and inseparability of the Bengalees.

Patriots, he said, were the chosen of God. They were put through the baptism of fire so that they might steel their hearts to fight autocracy without yielding.

CONCLUSION

He, however, withdrew from the anti-Partition agitation when the extremists bade fair to take over control of the movement in Bengal. The influence of humanitarianism steadily drew him away from that kind of patriotism which, bordering on extremism, denied the existence of anything above it. Though he placed the national *dhamma* above militant patriotism or nationalism, he continued to sympathize with the aspirations of his countrymen even after his withdrawal from the agitation. His national songs continued to set on fire every patriotic heart, both during and long after the agitation over the Partition had ended.

Immortalized in his works, Rabindranath Tagore passed away in Calcutta on 7 August 1941.

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KALIPRASANNA KAVYABISHARAD

"A devoted patriot, he never spared himself in the service of the motherland.". This was the tribute paid by Surendranath Banerjea to Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad, one of the most fascinating personalities in the history of renascent Bengal. Son of Rakhal Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, he was born on 9 June 1861 at Bhowanipore in Calcutta. His ancestral home was at Ichapore in the 24-Parganas.

After passing the Entrance Examination in 1876, he read Sanskrit with Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan and received from him the title of *Kavyabisharad*. It was, however, Dwarakanath who initiated Kaliprasanna into journalism. With time he became a fearless and purposeful journalist, editing, one after another, 'The Anti-Christian', 'The Cosmopolitan', *Prakriti* and, lastly, *Hitabadi*. Many other journals, e.g., *Soma Prakash*, *Panchananda* and *Sabitya-Sambita*, were enriched by his poems and essays, biting satires and parodies, which spared neither the Government nor any individual, whatever might be his standing in society. His satires were published under different pseudonyms, such as Prasannakumar Chatterji, Jogendranath Banerji and Fakirchand Babaji.

FOE OF THE ENEMIES OF INDIAN ADVANCEMENT

Kaliprasanna was an implacable foe of the enemies of Indian advancement. His first attempt at scarifying and holding them up to ridicule was seen in his pungent satire entitled *Sabhyata Sopan*, *Drishya-Samajchitra* (Stepping Stone to Enlightenment, Scene—A

Picture of Society). It was published in 1878 under the pseudonym Prasannakumar Chatterji. He attacked in it the English-educated Bengalees for their intemperate habits, atheistic tendencies and their inordinate love of tall talk and speech-making on patriotism and political topics.

His aversion for the hypocrisy of many Christian missionaries was also powerfully expressed in the book. He called them rank hypocrites, because they, while ostensibly engaged in preaching the Gospel, treated the natives of the country in the most humiliating manner. He satirized their style of preaching, their Bengali pronunciation and their unconscionable vituperation of Hindu gods and goddesses. Even the hypocritical character of the native Christian converts was not spared by his slashing pen. His aversion for missionary proselytization was so intense that he spoke against it at many meetings and brought out, on 1 February 1882, a monthly called 'The Anti-Christian'. This journal was devoted to exposing "the absurdities, inconsistencies, errors and immoralities of Biblical fictions". Some of his essays published in the journal, namely, the "Evils of Imparting Christian Education to Tender Minds", "Eternal Damnation", etc., were rendered into Bengali and copies of these were distributed free of cost among the people. By whipping up the anti-Christian sentiment of the people Kaliprasanna succeeded in making them considerably anti-British, a feeling positively disliked by the Government.

British bureaucracy, with its system of judicial administration, was also mordantly criticized by Kaliprasanna in his *Sabhyata Sopan*. He ridiculed the manner in which trials of Europeans, accused of murdering Indians, were conducted in law courts. It was disgusting to see the widow and the children of a syce, who was beaten to death by a European, receiving from the law court only a few rupees as compensation for the loss of their guardian. Suborned witnesses, a medical officer bribed into saying that the death of the syce was due to the rupture of his spleen, a biased European Jury and an equally biased European Judge, all combined to deny justice to the wronged handicapped by their colour and position in society. Kaliprasanna was prompt in seizing upon any opportunity that came his way to criticize the ill-conducted judicial administration of the country. On 28 May 1901 he published his *Panel Prasanga* to show the unholy combination formed by the administrative and judicial branches of the Government against the people. As a matter of fact, this scandalous state of things

was revealed by Mr. Panel, the Sessions Judge of Chapra, in one of his judgements in 1901. While endeavouring to point out, in course of his judgement, how Government officials at Chapra took pride in oppressing the innocent instead of protecting them, he referred to an analogous case at Noakhali wherein the real offenders were protected and patronized by the bureaucrats to the extent of undermining public confidence in the British system of justice. For this truthful exposure of the means and ends of the British judicial system, Mr. Panel, who cared nothing for his own interests, earned the gratitude of many Indians, including Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad.

Obviously enough, the Government did not take kindly to *Sabhyata Sopan*. The Calcutta Gazette of 29 January 1879, after reviewing the book, commented: "It is an altogether mischievous production, calculated to foster discontent and mislead ignorant people". This adverse comment provoked Kaliprasanna into writing a poem, *Nirdoshir Aparadh* (the Offence of the Innocent), which was addressed to the author of *Sabhyata Sopan* (i.e., Kaliprasanna himself). In this poem, written in the first person, he expressed his surprise at the alarm caused in the heart of the bureaucracy by the truthful depiction of a picture of widespread oppression in society. It was not known to him that truth was unholy in bureaucratic eyes, or that it tended to make ignorant subjects discontented. To him, the ways of the free English were inscrutable, otherwise why should his love for the culture of his own land be a crime in their eyes? Puzzled but not dismayed, he made it clear that he was not afraid to tell the truth even to the king. If that cost him his life or led to the rupture of his spleen in the manner in which many native spleens were ruptured in the mofussil, it mattered little to him. Truth was his refuge, and truth he must always speak, no matter what the consequences were. His fearless and caustic writings created and intensified among a large number of people a feeling of hostility to the Government and the British in general.

A PATRIOTIC JOURNALIST

A fearless and truthful journalist, who, as Surendranath Banerjee remarked, wielded the resources of the Bengali language "with a power that made him the terror of his enemies and of the enemies of his country", Kaliprasanna was frank enough to express his abhorrence for the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 in his *Sabhyata Sopan*. He hated the autocratic spirit which led the authorities to

pass that measure. It was this spirit which made Lord Lytton intolerant of honest criticism of Government policy made in the Indian Press.

Imbued with a high sense of editorial responsibility, Kaliprasanna refused to disclose in the court of law the name of the author of the defamatory poem, *Ruchi Bihar*, published in the *Hitabadi* on 24 July 1896. He preferred to undergo nine months' imprisonment rather than flinch from his responsibility as editor of the *Hitabadi* by disclosing the name of the author in question. He was, however, released from the gaol after five months.

Journalism was to him a means of creating an informed public opinion on all questions concerning Indian interests, as well as of breathing manliness and patriotism into Indian life.

PROMOTER OF THE VERNACULAR LITERATURE

It was in a spirit of dedication that Kaliprasanna served the cause of Bengali literature. He enriched it by the racy style of his writings. To him, any work of literature that tended to promote mere maudlin thoughts in man, without making him think and act vigorously, was not worthy of attention.

Kaliprasanna was intimately associated with Raja Binay Krishna Deb's *Sabitya Sabha* from 1900. The organ of this *Sabha* was called the *Sabitya-Sambhita*. In his introduction to the first number of this journal, Kaliprasanna made a patriotic appeal to his countrymen to cultivate the knowledge and culture of their highly civilized forbears. This was the only way they could retrieve the pristine glory and greatness of their motherland.

Patriotic in all his endeavours, he disseminated in the same spirit the knowledge of science, which he had painstakingly gathered in 1879-80 at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, through his Bengali journal, *Prakriti*. Though shortlived, the *Prakriti* showed that the mother tongue of the Bengalees was a very helpful medium for expressing all manner of scientific ideas.

A STAUNCH NATIONALIST

A staunch nationalist, keen on promoting the cause of the country's freedom, Kaliprasanna attended, with Surendranath Banerjea, the Congress sessions at Madras (1894), Amraoti (1887) and Lucknow (1899). He attended the Lucknow Congress of 1899 while running a temperature and with a warrant in a defamation

case hanging over him. His patriotic ardour for the cause of the country's political progress made him reckless of his health and life.

He played a truly inspiring role in the political life of Bengal after 1905. His national songs sung at every public meeting in Calcutta and elsewhere shook the audience out of their political apathy and inspired them to join the *Swadeshi* movement regardless of all consequences. His Hindi song, *Bhaiya, Deshki e kaya balat* (Brother, what a state the country has come to!), sung at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, "threw the whole audience into a state of wild excitement". He was also one of the central figures of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal in 1906. But, unfortunately, strenuous labour for the national cause at a moment when he was suffering from a fatal disease irreparably undermined his health. He undertook a voyage to Japan in 1907, with a friend, to recover his health. But on his way back home he died at sea on 4 July 1907.

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KADAMBINI GANGOPADHYAYA

Daughter of Brajakisore Basu and wife of Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, Kadambini Debi was born about 1862. Educated at the Banga Mahila Vidyalaya, she passed the Entrance Examination in 1878. She graduated from the Bethune College in 1882. Before proceeding to England in 1892 for higher medical studies, she passed the L.M.S. Examination from the Medical College in 1886. She returned from England with many medical diplomas: L.R.C.P. (Edin), L.R.C.S. (Glasgow) and D.F.P.S. (Dublin).

A. PATRIOT

Like Swarnakumari Debi, Kadambini Gangopadhyaya dearly loved her country and completely identified herself with the aims of the Indian National Congress. She was one of the woman-delegates chosen from Bengal to attend the Bombay Congress of 1889. It is

known from the report of the *Sanjibani* of 10 January 1891 that Kadambini Debi attended also the Calcutta Congress of 1890 together with a large number of ladies. She even addressed the assembly in English, thereby causing a great stir among the delegates. The precursor of political awakening among Bengali women, her activities showed how the outflow of female energy into the channels of national regeneration, as a result of the gradual decay of the dam of customary inhibitions under the erosive influence of education, could be beneficial to society.

Kadambini Debi devoted herself to social work as well, particularly to the task of promoting the welfare of women. Political leaders and social workers held her in high esteem for her exemplary spirit of public service.

The first woman graduate of the Calcutta University, the first lady doctor of renaissance Bengal and the first woman delegate to address the Indian National Congress, Kadambini Gangopadhyaya passed away on 3 October 1923.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Striding across the length and breadth of India like a mighty colossus, spreading the virile principles of the Vedanta in the light of his Master's teachings to regenerate his fallen nation and to direct its footsteps towards freedom, Swami Vivekananda, Bengal's spiritual "Prometheus Unbound", was the most inspiring figure among his countrymen in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Son of Biswanath Datta, a Calcutta Attorney-at-Law, Narendranath Datta, subsequently known as Swami Vivekananda, was born on 12 January 1863 at Simulia in Calcutta. A meritorious student, he graduated from the General Assembly's Institution in 1883. Desirous of joining the legal profession, he prepared for the Law Examination, but he could not sit for it on account of the distracting domestic troubles that followed his father's death in 1884.

Born with a spiritual turn of mind, he felt attracted more towards the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna than towards attaining worldly success. His restless quest for the Truth, which made him

move from Brahmo theism to rational atheism, ultimately ended in his discovery of the sublimest human knowledge in the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, who, after becoming his preceptor, voluntarily transmitted all his spiritual power to him before his death in 1886.

Fortified by his Master's spirit and also by divine guidance, he set out on his arduous travels from the humble Alambazar monastery to the different parts of India as a monk, discovering the country for himself and advocating the cause of its regeneration on the basis of the Vedantic principles of unity and service to humanity. Wherever he went, his virile message of sympathy for "man in bondage" won him followers from amongst the rich and the lowly.

Destiny, however, drew him towards a bigger mission. In September 1893 he went to America to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago. His speeches, which held audiences spellbound, proved how appropriate was the tribute of Professor Wright of Harvard when he wrote about him that he was a man who was "more learned than all our learned professors put together". These speeches effectively projected the aims and ideals of Hinduism as well as the universalism of religion. This first cultural ambassador for India, "this cyclonic monk from India", was hailed by the New York Herald as "the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions". He made many Americans openly admit the foolishness of sending missionaries to his country. His subsequent lectures on the Vedanta in the different cities of America as well as in England brought under the triumphant banner of Hinduism many foreigners, of whom Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble), Sister Christine (Miss Greenstidel), Sister Haridasi (Miss S. E. Waldo), Mr. J. J. Goodwin, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier are well known to Indians.

On his return home in January 1897 he was hailed as a national hero. The rousing receptions given to him by the people were matched by his rousing speeches. "Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached"—the goal being the regeneration of the motherland—was his clarion call to them. In January 1899 he established at Belur the headquarters of his new monastic order, known as the Ramakrishna Mission, which still flourishes as the most enduring monument to his selfless spirit of service. His two monthlies, 'Prabuddha Bharata' in English (1896) and *Udbodhana* in Bengali (1899), were launched to help the propagation of the Vedantic religion in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. In June 1899 he paid a second visit to America to organize Vedanta centres in New York and San Fran-

cisco. On his way back home he attended the Congress of the History of Religions held in Paris in July 1900.

PROMOTER OF NATIONALISM

Vivekananda's mission in life was to effect the regeneration of his motherland by resuscitating his countrymen's faith in their own religion and culture. He gave them this faith by redeeming India's honour through his stirring speeches in the West on the liberal message of the Vedanta as well as on the dynamic power of Hindu spirituality. The favourable response of the West to his message not only shook the torpor of the conservative Indians, but also checked the rush of the intelligentsia towards Anglicization.

A conscious pride in their own culture was as much needed for creating a spirit of nationalism in them as a sense of self-reliance. And self-reliance would come if they discarded their fear-complex and learnt to depend more on their own strength than on "occultism and mysticism". What the country needed most, said he, was "muscles of iron and nerves of steel—gigantic wills" that nothing could resist. For strengthening the biceps young men needed physical exercise. They were told that heaven was "nearer through football than through the Gita". This became the slogan of the youthful nationalists of his time. Vivekananda himself, while a student, regularly visited Ambu Guha's *akbra* for physical training.

Every young man was asked to have a sound mind in a sound body. For his spiritual and mental strength he was exhorted to imbibe in the proper spirit the Upanishadic truths together with a "man-making education". The Upanishads were a "great mine of strength", for freedom—physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom—was their watchword. Nothing was better calculated to awaken in his countrymen a more well-rounded sense of freedom. And this sense of freedom would come if self-reliance could be inspired—a purpose to achieve which Vivekananda was even prepared to "go into a thousand hells".

NATIONAL REGENERATION THROUGH SPIRITUALITY

"Dynamic spirituality" as innate in character-building religion was not only the best means of expressing India's national genius, but also the best way of promoting India's national regeneration.

To Vivekananda, religion, however, did not mean a system under which *sadhus* and priests could suck the blood of the poor. Such

a system was actually "the devil's dance". Besides, to make a fetish of spirituality was equally bad. Side by side with promoting a character-building religion among the people attempts must also be made to advance their material welfare. Without the satisfaction of material wants, no higher thought or ideal could be developed. "I do not believe in a God", said he, "who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!" Material civilization was thus necessary "to create work for the poor", but, he pointed out, it should not be divorced from the great spiritual values of Indian life. He firmly believed that nothing could better impart durability to Indian society than "the bed-rock of spirituality". He explained: "When the life-blood is strong and pure no disease can live in the body. Our life-blood is spirituality".

Education, a very important means of promoting national regeneration, must be both spiritual and secular. Any system of education that made its beneficiaries lose sight of the spiritual values of Indian life was bound to lead to the degeneration of the individual's as well as the nation's character. But at the same time it should not be indifferent to the secular interests of the nation. To acquire knowledge of the world and to develop their own industries, Indians must learn the English language and all about Western science and its technical progress. Vivekananda always believed that if spiritual knowledge, stemming from the revival of Vedantic thought, was spread together with secular knowledge in the country, it would tremendously help the programme of national reconstruction.

He wanted the extension of spirituality to India's political life as well. He believed that the political life of the people, unleavened by religion or spirituality, was bound to be dangerous to the larger interests of the nation.

REGENERATION BY ENDING SOCIAL TYRANNY

Social tyranny, sanctioned by *Smriti* legislation, was unbearable to Vivekananda. He thus cried out: "No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody!" He condemned the caste system and supported inter-dining and intercaste marriage. To him, "every frozen aristocracy or privileged class" was a blow to the nation. Pointing out that every *Sudra* was his brother, he regretted the tendency of the Indian conservatives to confine religion to the kitchen. Untouchability and *Smriti* interdiction against kinds of food constituted the height of intolerance which ran counter to true

Hinduism's broad spirit of tolerance. If meat-eating could not stop the flow of God's mercy to a Hindu, similarly making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen (said when the Age of Consent Bill was passed) could not constitute Hindu religion. He held that if the priests had not interfered in every social matter or if the medieval leaders had not stooped to fetter the masses with rigid social laws, the face of India would have been entirely different today. All irrational inhibitions, which perpetuated the exploitation of the lower classes by the higher, must go. Unless there was liberty for every individual—liberty to think and speak, liberty in food, dress, marriage and in every other matter, without injuring others—social regeneration would be difficult to bring about.

For social regeneration Vivekananda also wanted every Hindu to set aside the meaningless taboos of society and mix with all races of the world. To him, every Hindu who travelled abroad did render a greater service to the country than hundreds of men who were bundles of superstitions and selfishness. "Expansion is life", said he, "contraction is death". One of the causes of India's degeneration was the wall of custom built round her. It must be broken down to release her Vedantic spirit of freedom.

Education, he held, was the panacea of all social evils. It had to be "a man-making education", an education which did not tend to turn a boy or a girl into "a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless".

Much of social tyranny would also disappear if women were given education. The *Smritis*, he pointed out, had imprisoned them and had reduced them to a status of abject dependence in society. If the doors of education were thrown open to them, modern India could be proud to have many a Maitreyi and a Gargi, who had added a glorious chapter to the history of the Vedic times. To Vivekananda, the education of the girl was the education of the mother, and through her of her children. This would not only improve the moral tone of society, but also help strengthen the great values of Indian culture.

NEED TO END ECONOMIC TYRANNY

The economic exploitation of the masses by the rich was responsible for the degradation of the motherland. The poverty of the masses in India caused Vivekananda excruciating pain. None seemed to think seriously for the poor, though they were the back-

bone of the country. They produced food for all, while they themselves starved.

He wanted the rich and the educated to make conscious efforts to uplift the masses and free them from the grip of hunger and starvation. The youths, particularly, were exhorted by him to move from cottage to cottage to educate the masses. "Remember", he told them, "that the nation lives in the cottage". Without education the masses could neither have faith in themselves, nor could they shake off their fear-complex and fatalism. Vivekananda emphatically stated that no amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses of India were "once more well educated, well fed and well cared for". Upon their awakening, upon the recognition of their right to an equal share of opportunities, depended to a great extent the national regeneration of India. Without raising the masses to a higher and better life, Indians would not be able to achieve genuine freedom for themselves.

The masses had been exploited long enough everywhere in the world, and his prophetic vision enabled him to prophesy the advent of the rule of the 'sudras' (labouring classes) in Russia and China. This rule, he said, would come after that of the 'vaishyas' (bourgeoisie). And in the wake of the 'sudra' rule would emerge a proletarian culture, uniting the masses of divergent communities into a homogeneous body.

DENOUNCER OF POLITICAL TYRANNY

Like economic tyranny, he hated foreign rule as well. He wanted his countrymen to break the chains of political slavery with the help of the princes of India. Pandit Sakham Ganesh Deushkar disclosed to the revolutionaries of Bengal in 1904 that Vivekananda had tramped all over the country after his Master's death, impelled by the sole desire to form a combination of Indian princes against the British Government. He even made friends with the gun-maker, Sir Hiram Maxim. But, unfortunately, his appeal for unity fell on deaf ears. Thus said he in disgust to Deushkar: "I got no response from the country. The country is dead".

Undaunted, he went on preaching the Upanishadic truths to awaken among his countrymen the spirit of freedom. They had wept long enough. The time had come for them to imbibe the Upanishadic truths, which alone could give them *Kshatra-virya* (strength) and *Brahma-teja* (manhood). These could make individuals not only

self-reliant, strong and brave, but also useful "sappers and miners" in the army of regeneration. Only the brave and the heroic deserved freedom. India's greatest need of the hour was a band of fiery missionaries dedicated to the cause of her regeneration and inseparably wedded to the vow: "I am an Indian and every Indian is my brother and the soil of India is my highest heaven". No sacrifice, not even death, should deter them from promoting the interests of their Mother. Thus wrote he in his poem, 'Come, Mother, Come':

"Who dares misery love
And hug the form of Death
Dance in Destruction's dance

To him the Mother comes".

Indeed, the Mother (strength and freedom) would come if her children could sacrifice themselves for her sake.

It was painful to him to see India under a foreign power. He thus preached the idea that "she must seek freedom by the aid of the Mother of Strength (*Sakti*)". The Sedition Committee Report of 1918 pointedly refers to these words of Vivekananda to show his influence on the revolutionaries of Bengal from 1904. The *Anusilan Samiti*, as the Report states, not only prescribed "the writings of Vivekananda" for its members, but also employed "the religious principle of absolute surrender to the Divine Will to influence them to commit crimes against the Government".

REGENERATION THROUGH SERVICE

Vivekananda was aware that India was "in putrefaction". He felt that if the social and economic conditions responsible for it were removed by a band of selfless workers, the future of the country was bound to be bright. He himself set an example of selfless service by working among the plague-stricken people of Calcutta in 1898. Then he established the Ramakrishna Mission, a new monastic order dedicated to the propagation of the Vedantic truth necessary for national regeneration. Character-building and creation of a regenerative spirit of service in the whole country were the primary purposes of the Mission.

The *sannyasi*-workers were exhorted to cast aside all thoughts about their own *Bhakti* and *Mukti* and work selflessly among the masses not only to rouse them from their degrading torpor, but also to make them fit for a better and nobler life. The masses were their *Gana-Narayan*, and to serve them was to serve God. So possessed

was Vivekananda with this spirit of service that he declared himself the servant of him only who served and helped others without caring for his own *Bhakti* and *Mukti*.

UNITY AND TOLERANCE

Like his Master, Vivekananda also stressed the universalism of religion, the supreme Upanishadic truth. The golden thread of unity ran through all religions. Though they differed in their externals, their ultimate aim was to help man to realize God.

Over religion there should not be any quarrel, for every religion was "the language of the soul", and no two souls could differ, because they emanate from the same Divine Being. Variations in the externals of religions were like variations in food meant to satisfy different kinds of appetites. Thus, Vivekananda stressed that everybody should be left free to know and follow whatever suited him most.

Vivekananda was a living embodiment of tolerance. He always kept an open mind for the teachings of all religions—Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. The Bible, the Koran, and all other sacred books were as much revered by him as the Vedas. Needless to say, it was clear to him that his countrymen could not rebuild their national life on enduring foundations without religious unity and mutual tolerance. Mutual love helped the growth of unity and tolerance, and it was this love that found expression in the opening words of his first speech in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on 11 September 1893—"Sisters and brothers of America", which won him deafening cheers from all corners of the hall.

The greatest saintly patriot of Bengal, Vivekananda's soaring spirit of humanism broke the bounds of all kinds of parochialism in the stupendous endeavour to galvanize his countrymen into an active and purposeful life. His teachings and his life, which rejuvenated Hindu society and gave Hinduism a social purpose, left an undying influence over modern India. His life of purposeful dedication, which illuminated the right path of regeneration for his countrymen, came to a close at Belur on 4 July 1902.

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India and her Problems (Advaita Ashrama, 1934); Bhupendranath Datta, Swami Vivekananda: Patriot and Prophet—A Study. (1954); The Sedition Committee Report of 1918 (Ch. II).

DWIJENDRALAL ROY

Born at Krishnagar on 19 July 1863, Dwijendralal Roy was the youngest son of Dewan Kartikeyachandra Roy, whose progressive views helped him to become intimate with the builders of new Bengal, including Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ramtanu Lahiri, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Dinabandhu Mitra, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya. His parlour at Krishnagar was always kept warm by the frequent visits of Bengal's celebrities—litterateurs, poets, musicians, social reformers, educationists and patriotic nationalists. It was here that young Dwijendralal Roy developed his love for poetry, music and his country. His father, brave, honest and truthful, was a hero in his eyes. It is said that Durgadas, the Rajput hero of his historical drama of the same name, was actually cast by him in the heroic mould of his father, whose name in Krishnagar was a synonym for moral courage, forthrightness, and integrity.

After passing the Entrance and F.A. Examinations from the Krishnagar Collegiate School, he graduated from the Hooghly Mohsin College in 1883 and passed the M.A. Examination in English with great credit the following year from Presidency College. Then he went to England on a State Scholarship to specialize in agriculture. After his return in 1886, he secured with great difficulty a position for himself in the Uncovenanted Civil Service as Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector. In this Service, from which he retired in March 1913, he found no opportunity to apply his specialized knowledge of agriculture to any scheme of public usefulness in the country.

HIS SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

Dwijendralal never fawned upon nor cringed to English officials, however highly placed they might be. Because of his spirit of independence, he was viewed with suspicion by the authorities. His unwaver-

ing courage during the period of his quarrel with his official superiors, including Sir Charles Elliott, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, over a question concerning the assessment of land revenue turned him into a hero in the eyes of his countrymen. The incident occurred in 1890 while he was working as Settlement Officer of the Sujamuta pargana of the Burdwan Raj Estate in Midnapore. His formal objection to the Settlement Officers' practice of raising the revenue of a plot of land if it were found on re-measurement to be larger than the previously recorded size was viewed with disfavour by his superiors. The District Judge ruled out his objection, and the Lieutenant-Governor reprimanded him, after personally looking into the papers at Midnapore. But Dwijendralal unflinchingly stuck to his viewpoint, which enraged Sir Charles into passing an order from Calcutta upholding the old practice. Meanwhile, an appeal was made to the High Court against the District Judge's decision. And the High Court, while upholding the objection of Dwijendralal, not only invalidated the ruling of the District Judge, but also severely criticized the Lieutenant-Governor's order, which had to be subsequently rescinded. All settlement work in future was carried out in accordance with the High Court's judgement, the beneficiaries of which did not fail to heap their blessings upon young Dwijendralal. The way he stood up for justice and fairness in this matter at the cost of his own material interests was inspiring to his countrymen. That subsequently Government service proved as galling as slavery to him was clearly expressed by him in some of his poems in the second part of his *Aryagatha* published in 1893.

A CRITIC OF SOCIAL PREJUDICES

Dwijendralal was a bold critic of social prejudices. He ridiculed the practice of social ostracism and poured his scorn on the prejudice-bound minds in society in his *Ak Ghare* (1889). Actually, endeavours were made to tighten the screws of ostracism upon him in Krishnagar after his return from England. Troubles were stirred up at his marriage ceremony, but nothing could induce or intimidate him into submitting to the dictates of unreasonable men by atoning for his visit to England. On the contrary, it provoked him into saying in his *Ak Ghare* that all priests were thieves in a society that was rotten to the core. The whole situation gave him a good theme for his well-known farce, *Prayaschitta*. Like the conservatives, the imitative Anglicists in society also gave him enough material for his satirical poems.

A. PATRIOT

The fire of patriotism burned in his heart long before he took to writing historical dramas, which were all designed, from 1905, to inspire his countrymen with a sense of nationalism. The first glimpse of his patriotism can be had in his book of poems published in London in September 1886 under the title of 'Lyrics of Ind'. In this collection the poem that revealed his patriotic heart was 'The Land of the Sun', wherein he wrote:

"O my land! can I cease to adore thee,
Though to gloom and to misery hurled?

O dear Bharat! my beautiful maiden,

O sweet Ind! once the queen of the world.

And though wrecked is thy pride and thy glory,

Of it nothing remains but the name;

Yet a beauty and sunshine still lingers,

And yet gleams through the mist of thy shame".

His solid contributions to the growing spirit of nationalism in Bengal from 1905, which earned him enduring fame among his countrymen, are outside the scope of this brief study. In the opinion of Suresh Chandra Samajpati, Dwijendralal Roy, who died on 17 May 1913, was not a mere poet, not a mere composer of satiric songs, but the high priest of nationalism—the poet of the *Swadeshi* cult.

Bibliography: *Dewan Kartikeya Chandra Rayer Atma-Jiban Charit* (Indian Associated Publishing, Cal., 1363 B.S.); Rathindranath Roy, *Dwijendralal: Kabi O Natyakar* (1960); B. N. Bandyopadhyaya, *Dwijendralal Roy (Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala, No. 69)*.

JOGESH CHANDRA CHAUDHURI

Son of Durgadas Chaudhuri, Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri was born on 28 June 1864 at Haripur in Pabna. After taking his M.A. Degree from Presidency College in 1886, he worked for some time in the Metropolitan College as Professor of Chemistry. He then went to Oxford to study Law and returned to Calcutta as a barrister in 1895. A member of the Calcutta High Court Bar, he was the founder of the 'Weekly Notes', a reputed law journal.

ADVOCATE OF SELF-RELIANCE

He believed that his countrymen could become self-reliant and enterprising if they boldly forged ahead with the task of developing the indigenous industries. As one of the pioneers of the industrial movement in Bengal, he organized, in cooperation with Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya and several others, the exhibition of *Swadeshi* articles during the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1896. The exhibition of 1906, held in connection with the Calcutta session of the Congress, was virtually organized by him. Held at a moment when the whole country was seething with excitement over the *Swadeshi* movement, these exhibitions made devoted men, instinct with the new spirit, apply themselves with irrepressible zeal to the development of indigenous industries. The protectionist spirit of the movement helped the development of a spirit of self-reliance among the people.

When at the Lahore session of the Congress in 1900 an Industrial Committee was set up on the proposal of Lala Lajpat Rai, Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri, together with Baikunthanath Sen, Bhupendra Nath Basu, Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Maitra and others, became its member.

POLITICAL REGENERATION

Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri was also an ardent champion of the cause of local self-government. At the Madras session of the Congress in 1898 he wholeheartedly seconded Ganeshsree Kharpade's resolution, condemning the attempts of the Government to bring the Calcutta Municipality and the Bombay City Improvement Trust completely under its control.

An active worker in the cause of the *Swadeshi* movement, Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri passed away on 9 February 1951.

Bibliography: S. N. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (1925); Bagal, *Muktir Sandhane Bharat* (1367 B.S.).

DWIJENDRANATH BASU

Son of Braja Kisore Basu, a school teacher, Dwijendranath Basu was born on 18 December 1865 at Bhagalpur. After passing the F.A.

Examination, he had to discontinue his studies on account of illness. He taught for some time at the Jessore Sanmilani School.

POLITICAL WORKER

His keen political consciousness led him to work seriously in behalf of the Indian Association, of which he became the Secretary after the death of his reputed brother-in-law, Dwarakanath Gangopadhyaya, in June 1898. On behalf of the Association he undertook a strenuous and hazardous tour of the tea-gardens in Assam to study the conditions in which the labourers worked. The ruthless exploitation of labour in the tea-gardens, which the Congress at its third session treated as a provincial problem, sent a wave of indignation over the whole of Bengal. Eminent leaders, like Ananda Mohan Basu and Mahendra Lal Sircar, always felt exercised over it. By making this exploitation the focal-point of public attention in Bengal, Dwijendranath conduced to the creation of a strong feeling of revulsion against it among the people.

Dwijendranath was also intimately associated with the Indian National Congress. He helped to organize the industrial exhibition during the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1901.

A demure but earnest political worker till the last day of his life, Dwijendranath Basu died in November 1921.

Bibliography: S. Vidyalkara, *Jibani Kosh* (Bharatiya Aitibhasik, Vol. IV, 1346 B.S.); Bagal, *Muktir Sandhane Bharat* (1367 B.S.).

NIKHILNATH RAY

Poet, journalist and historian, Nikhilnath Ray, son of Janakinath Ray, was born in December 1865 at Pura, a village in the Basirhat Subdivision of the 24-Parganas. It was from the Berhampore College that he graduated in 1892 and took his B.L. Degree in 1897. He practised first at the Berhampore Court and then at the Calcutta High Court before taking service under the Maharaja of Cossimbazar.

PROMOTER OF A FEELING OF NATIONALITY

Nikhilnath's *Murshidabader Itibas* (History of Murshidabad), published in 1902, tried to rehabilitate Sirajuddaula in the eyes of his

countrymen. The true facts of history, he pointed out, did not justify his denigration. This book tended to promote a feeling of nationality among the educated people.

On 27 December 1902 the *Rangalaya* published in its English columns the correspondence of *Nikhil Chandra Ray* (it was none other than Nikhilnath Ray himself), who pointed out, on the basis of the evidence offered by Akshay Kumar Maitra and Biharilal Sarkar, that the re-erection of the Holwell monument by Lord Curzon to commemorate the so-called Black Hole Tragedy was absolutely unjustified. It was strange that even an intelligent man like Lord Curzon could not realize that it was physically impossible for a hundred and forty-six men to be shut up in a room measuring only 18 ft. by 23 ft. With the help of other evidences, he proved that Lord Curzon re-erected the monument just to glorify the greatness of the British empire. That Holwell was a liar was his main contention. His memory did not deserve to be perpetuated.

His revival of Akshay Kumar Maitra's *Aitibhasik Chitra* (a historical magazine) in 1904 was aimed at promoting national spirit by making the people conscious of their glorious past.

Biographer and son-in-law of the well-known scholar, Dr. Ramdas Sen, Nikhilnath Ray passed away on 4 November 1932.

Bibliography: B. N. Bandyopadhyaya, *Nikhilnath Ray (Sabitya Sadhak Charitmala*, No. 71); Harimohan Mukhopadhyaya, *Bangabhasar Lekhak* (1311 B.S.); Nikhilnath Ray, *Murshidabader Itihas* (1902); Confidential Report on Native Papers' (Part II, 1902).

RAJA BINAY KRISHNA DEB BAHADUR

Son of Maharaja Kamal Krishna Deb, Raja Binay Krishna Deb Bahadur was born in August 1866. While in his teens, he became interested in vernacular literature. It was under his unstinted patronage that the 'Academy of Bengali Literature' became the *Bangiya Sabitya Parishad* in 1894, with Romesh Chunder Dutt, I.C.S., as its first President. He was a source of inspiration to that small band of patriotic intellectuals, who strove hard to enrich the Bengali language and its literature.

CONTRIBUTION TO POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Together with his brother, Maharaj Kumar Neel Krishna Deb, Binay Krishna became interested in politics very early in life. Both of them were the political pupils of Surendranath Banerjea. They joined the Indian Association while very young, took a deep interest in its proceedings and "developed a considerable aptitude for political work".

The premature death of Neel Krishna threw upon Binay Krishna the responsibility of leading the agitation against the Calcutta Municipal Bill of 1897. Mammoth meetings were held in Calcutta from August 1898 under his presidency to express the resentment of the rate-payers against the undemocratic character of the Corporation's Executive Committee of twelve proposed to be set up under the Bill. The Commissioners were allowed to elect only four representatives to the Executive Committee of twelve, which, if constituted on a popular basis, could have exercised some restraint on the Chairman nominated by the Government and invested with large independent powers. Besides, the Bill caused widespread resentment by reducing the number of members to be directly elected by the rate-payers to half the total strength. When the Bill became an Act in 1899 on the insistence of Lord Curzon, twenty-eight Commissioners, including Surendranath Banerjea and Binay Krishna, resigned their seats in the Calcutta Corporation as a protest against what came to be called "the extinction of local self-government" in the city of Calcutta. Even Romesh Chunder Dutt, whose inspiring letters from England never allowed Binay Krishna's zeal for the cause to flag, failed to induce the British authorities to abandon the undemocratic Bill. He thus wanted Binay Krishna to proclaim to the whole world that the Bill was "a measure of confiscation of existing rights". Needless to say, the meetings organized by Binay Krishna, in cooperation with Surendranath Banerjea and others, went a long way in stirring up the political consciousness of the people.

He also whipped up a strong anti-British feeling among the people by spearheading the agitation against the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, which was described by the *Dainik-O-Samachar Chandrika* of 22 March 1891 as a deliberate interference with the Hindu religion. On 25 February 1891 he helped to organize a monster public meeting at the Maidan against the Bill.

Binay Krishna helped Surendranath to start the national daily called the 'Bengalee', and in raising funds for the Ripon College.

Every cause that tended to promote his countrymen's interests received his generous help.

Author of the 'Early History and Growth of Calcutta', Raja Binay Krishna Deb Bahadur was elected Vice-President of the Calcutta Historical Society in 1907. He was the moving spirit behind the philanthropic institution known as the Sobhabazar Benevolent Society. Surendranath looked upon him as "a valuable member of the Bengalee community". His death on 1 December 1912 was a grievous loss to "the many interests with which he was associated".

Bibliography: See J. N. Gupta, Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt (1911); Confidential Report on Native Papers (Part I, 1891); Hunter's Letter to Binay Krishna (Journal of the Bengal Academy of Literature, Vol. I, No. 7, February 9, 1894); The Bangiya Sahitya Parishad or The Bengal Academy of Literature (An account of the first eleven years of the Parishad).

SAKHARAM GANESH DEUSHKAR

Son of Ganesh Sadasib, a Maratha Brahmin, Sakharam Ganesh Deushkar was born at Deoghar on 17 December 1869. Educated at Deoghar High English School and domiciled in Bengal, he grew into an accomplished writer in Bengali. He made his mark, not as a teacher, but as a journalist and author of historical works in Bengali, one of which, entitled *Desher Katha* (1904), came to be proscribed by the Government for its ruthless criticism of the British policy of exploitation. His political preceptors were Rajnarayan Basu and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

DENOUNCER OF BRITISH EXPLOITATION

His *Desher Katha* was a powerful exposition of the main causes of the unpopularity of British rule in India. British rule was unpopular, because it had bled the people white. This rule was based on ruthless exploitation of India's resources. It had led to the destruction of Indian commerce and industries. Apart from making the people dependent on agriculture, it reduced their purchasing capacity and forced them to subsist on a starvation diet. Rice was exported to foreign countries while the impoverished cultivators starved. Sakharam quoted many authorities, including Romesh Chunder

Dutt and Dadabhai Naoroji, to show how and to what extent India had been drained of her wealth by Britain. The English felt no compunction for spending very little of Indian revenue on India. They grew fat in England on their accumulations made in India.

British rule led not only to the mental and moral degeneration of Indians, but also to the gradual destruction of their skill as architects, builders and textile-workers.

British administration also led to the neglect of the nation's intellect. Its system of education was designed to multiply the number of servile *keranis* (clerks) in society. All posts of trust and responsibility were closed to Indians, no matter how talented they were. Native qualifications were always undervalued. The superiority complex of the English not only warped the system of justice in India, but also created a depressing atmosphere in which Indians could not breathe freely.

European missionaries joined hands with the British bureaucracy to undermine the foundations of Hinduism with a view to leading young Indians astray. The habit of drinking, promoted by English education among the Indians, was demoralizing for the whole society. Thus, the debasing character of British rule made Lord George Hamilton say: "Our Government never will be popular in India. . . . Our Government never can be popular in India" (quoted from *The Times*, 16 June 1899, in *Desher Katha*).

POLITICAL REGENERATION

It was Sakhambari who took the initiative in organizing the first Sivaji festival in Bengal in June 1902. His pamphlet, *Sivaji Mahattva* (Sivaji's Greatness), written for the festival of 1902, was distributed free of cost on the occasion of the second festival celebrated in July 1903. While carrying out the task of political regeneration, he wanted his countrymen to place before themselves the ideals of Sivaji the Great, who built an empire free from the divisive influences of the caste system and communalism. He pointed out to them that in the combination of Sivaji and Ramdas—of the *Karmayogi* and the *Jnanayogi*—lay the true strength of the Maratha empire. He, thus, wanted them to follow these ideals while striving for their political emancipation (*Sivaji Diksha*, 1904).

His *Jhansir Rajkumar* was another inspiring piece of writing on the sufferings inflicted by the grasping and designing British upon the son of Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Jhansi.

More inspiring was his *Baji Rao*, which traced the Maratha effort to save the religion and culture of the Hindus from destruction at the hands of their enemies. The Maratha imperial ideals, broad and liberal, were held up before the people to inspire them in their endeavour for the cause of national regeneration. This book was highly praised even by Romesh Chunder Dutt.

Sakharam had great faith in the aims and ideals of the Indian National Congress, which steadily led the country to unity. He felt heartened to see this organization seriously endeavour to promote political consciousness among the people. Its industrial exhibitions were instructive. They emphasized the need for imparting industrial training to young men in the country.

Sakharam, who played an active part in the anti-Partition agitation, joined the extremist (nationalist) group of the Congress in Bengal in 1906. Because of his extremist leanings, he had to give up the editorship of the *Hitavadi*, a responsibility which he ably discharged for about five months after the death of Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad in July 1907.

Sakharam Ganesh Deushkar enriched Bengali literature by his historical works, all written to inspire the people of Bengal to wage an unyielding struggle against the British. He died at Deoghar on 23 November 1912.

Bibliography: Sakharam Ganesh Deushkar, *Desher Katha* (1904), *Krishaker Sarbanash* (extracts reprinted from *Desher Katha*, 1904), *Jhansir Rajkumar* (1901), *Baji Rao* (1902), *Sivaji Diksha* (published together with Rabindranath Tagore's poem, *Sivaji Utsav*, and distributed free of cost on the occasion of the Sivaji festival in 1904); Brajendranath Bandyopadhyaya, *Sakharam Ganesh Deushkar (Sabitya Sadhak Chiritmala*, No. 90).

RAMA KANTA ROY

Rama Kanta Roy, son of Kali Kishore Roy, personified the bold spirit of resurgent Bengal. He was born in 1873 at Jalsuka in Sylhet.

Rama Kanta studied for some time at the City College, Calcutta, after passing the Entrance Examination in 1894. While a student, he accepted Brahmoism under the influence of Sivanath Sastri, Krishna

Kumar Mitra and Heramba Chandra Maitra. In July 1898, he went to Japan to study mining. After a successful career in Japan, he returned to Calcutta in October 1903 and was given a warm reception at a Town Hall meeting presided over by Dr. Sundari Mohan Das and addressed by Surendranath Banerjea. His first appointment was in Kashmir as Mining Engineer. But he soon gave up this respectable situation in preference for a humble post at Raniganj, from where he could not only maintain a close contact with the revolutionary youth of Bengal, but also kindle their spirit of patriotism by his own.

ADVOCATE OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

Rama Kanta was a staunch advocate of economic nationalism. He wanted, as expressed in one of his letters from Japan published in the fourth issue (first year) of the *Prabasi*, more and more of his countrymen to take to industrial activity to prevent the flow of India's wealth to Britain. To attain this purpose, they should, in the first instance, raise a fund of Rs. 40 lakhs for facilitating the technical training of about a hundred young men every year in foreign countries and their subsequent absorption in Indian business and industry. He pointed out that if Bengalees could raise a crore of rupees for Queen Victoria's memorial fund, they should be able to collect a few crores for promoting the cause of industrial training among the educated youths in the interests of the nation. Secondly, Bengalees must restrain their unhelpful fondness for mere talking and for delivering fiery speeches. What the country expected of them was serious exertion in the field of commerce and industry. They should realize that all-round national progress was impossible without the development of national industry.

The 'anna-fund' started by Rama Kanta in Calcutta, after his return from Japan, showed how determined he was to put through his plan for the industrial training of Bengalee youths. According to his calculations, if 16,000 students of Calcutta donated 1-anna each per month, then Rs. 1,000 could be raised every year for maintaining four or five students abroad for industrial training. The 'Association for the Advancement of Scientific and Industrial Education' later proposed in March 1904 to raise the amount of voluntary donation to four annas per month. As for Rama Kanta, he sent Rs. 200 every month to four Bengalee students undergoing industrial training in America. This was a great sacrifice on his part, for his monthly salary then at Raniganj was Rs. 250 only. His burning ardour for

the cause made him indifferent to the bare necessities of his life, let alone creature comforts.

Long before the *Swadeshi* movement began in Bengal in 1905, he advocated, in his letter from Japan, that Bengalees must use *Swadeshi* goods for the sake of their industrial progress. They were asked to give up their preference for British cloth and use Indian cloth only, however coarse it might be. He was confident that if every Indian developed a patriotic liking for Indian cloth and goods, the economic condition of the people was bound to improve within thirty years.

APOSTLE OF UNITY

He emphasized that unity among Indians was the pre-requisite of their economic and political progress. They must feel for one another, for without any fellow-feeling there could be no concerted endeavour on their part to free their country from the economic grip of Britain. Unite they must also for the sake of the political progress of their country. This was ardently preached and practised by him in Calcutta after his return from Japan.

DIGNITY OF LABOUR

High regard for the principle of the dignity of labour characterized his short but eventful life throughout. During the boycott movement of 1905, when greedy traders put up the price of *Swadeshi* cloth to make more money taking advantage of the great demand for it, Rama Kanta personally carried bundles of such cloth on his shoulders and sold them from door to door in Calcutta. Many educated young men, including Sachindra Prasad Basu and Phani Bhusan Chakrabarty, all enthusiastic supporters of the Anti-Circular Society's aims, proudly followed in the footsteps of Rama Kanta. This inspiring act not only showed his countrymen the way to survival, but also freed the minds of many from their ill-conceived aversion for manual labour.

THE HUMANITARIAN

A born humanitarian, with a mind not bound by any social prejudice, Rama Kanta was never afraid to champion the cause of the downtrodden in Bengal. In 1904, he came forward to help the brave clerks of Burn & Co., who had struck work in protest against their humiliation at the hands of some European officers. Even Sister

Nivedita could not help praising "the unity and spirit of challenge" of these clerks. Rama Kanta collected funds for the strikers by giving open-air speeches in their behalf at College Square. That was how he saved the families of many strikers from sure starvation during the period of their unemployment.

It was the humanitarian in him that made him condemn the crying evils of Hindu society, namely, the caste system, child marriage and polygamy.

Rama Kanta Roy's burning spirit of dedication and of sacrifice earned him a very high place among the patriots of resurgent Bengal. The Partition of Bengal, which broke his heart, seemed to have hastened his death at the age of 33, after a brief illness, on 3 May 1906.

Bibliography: *Swadesh-premik Ramakanta Roy (Smritipuja Granthamala*, Part IV, ed. by Haridas Namananda and Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharya, 1st edition, 1357 B.S.); *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, March 11, 1904; Sister Nivedita's letters to G. K. Gokhale, compiled by V. V. Pendse (*Sister Nivedita Birth Centenary Souvenir*, Dec., 1966).

NALINI KANTA SEN

Nalini Kanta Sen was born in Chittagong about 1878 (?). His father, Kamala Kanta Sen, a prosperous pleader, was President of the Chittagong Association, which endeavoured to spread political consciousness among the local people. Jatra Mohan Sen was his political disciple. No less, however, was the influence of patriotic Kamala Kanta over his courageous son, Nalini Kanta.

EXEMPLAR OF PATRIOTISM

Nalini Kanta attained eminence as a great patriot, though he had in him the makings of a successful poet.

While a mere student between 1895 and 1897, he seriously propagated among the people of Chittagong the idea of using indigenous articles only, including cloth. This was done long before the commencement of the *Swadeshi* or boycott movement in 1905. He believed that if the people gave up the use of foreign cloth and other foreign articles, they would feel inclined not only to develop

the indigenous industries but also to establish new ones to meet their own needs. Nothing, he felt, could better instil in them a deep love for their motherland.

While a boarder of the Eden Hindu Hostel as an undergraduate student of the Presidency College from 1897 to 1899, he took the initiative in launching the *Alo*, a shortlived journal devoted to disseminating knowledge, particularly among the people of Chittagong.

After graduating from Presidency College he refused to read Law, as that would stand in the way of his serving the country. He returned to Chittagong, where he worked as a school teacher without taking any remuneration. He continued to preach as zealously as before his ideas about self-reliance and self-respect. Among his students, with whom he established an ideal relationship, he succeeded in creating an abiding love for the country and its manufactures. He abhorred caste restrictions and mixed freely with both his Hindu and Muslim students. To help them to become knowledgeable he established a library at Chittagong.

This inspiring life of dedication was brought to a close by illness on 20 January 1901.

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INDEX

A

- Acroyd, Miss (Mrs. Beveridge) 182, 340
 Ali, Ameer 203
 Ali, Nabab Mir Mohammed 353
 Anesty, Mr. 430

B

- Bandyopadhyaya, Bhabani Charan 7, 25-29
 —, Durgacharan 124, 137, 371
 —, Gooroodas 100, 284, 297-299, 301, 302, 353, 437
 —, Hemchandra 81, 238-241, 334, 345
 —, Indranath 334, 383, 384, 405
 —, Nabin Krishna 176
 —, Narayan Chandra 139
 —, Radhamadhab 28, 30, 31, 41, 59
 —, Rangalal 145, 195-197
 —, Tarapada 333, 334
 Banerjee (Bandyopadhyaya), Krishnamohan 10, 12, 18, 20, 29, 53, 68, 69, 82, 85-87, 89-92, 104, 106, 107, 175, 260, 283, 302, 381
 —, Surendranath 90, 92, 100, 127, 141, 146, 153, 154, 221, 226, 245, 247, 275, 284, 287, 294, 295, 297, 302, 305, 306, 309, 322, 333, 335-337, 342, 350, 354, 358, 360, 363, 371, 379, 381, 391, 392, 395, 401, 402, 407, 409, 428, 430, 463, 464, 480, 481, 484
 Banerjee, Bhairab Chandra 352, 353
 —, Gauri Charan 28
 —, Iswar Chandra 96
 —, Jitendranath 282
 —, Kali Charan 343, 344, 450
 —, Nabakrishna 73
 —, Raj Krishna 139
 —, Ramchand 74
 —, Shyamacharan 80
 Basak, Lal Bihari 319
 Basu, Ananda Mohan 90, 100, 141, 272,

- 284, 293, 302, 308, 337, 340, 342, 349, 350, 351-355, 373, 375, 391, 412, 437, 451, 456, 478
 —, Bhagaban Chandra 203-205
 —, Bhupendra Nath 423, 477
 —, Chandramukhi 137
 —, Chandranath 100, 153, 316-318
 —, Durganarayan 185
 —, Dwijendranath 477, 478
 —, Gaurmohan 80
 —, Girish Chandra 402-404
 —, Jogendra Chandra 405-408
 —, Joygopal 121
 —, Kailash Chandra 197-200
 —, Madhusudan 185
 —, Manomohan 212-214, 282
 —, Nabakrishna 340
 —, Nanda Kishore 181
 —, Pashupatinath 293
 —, Pramatha Nath 411-417
 —, Rajnarayan 98, 100, 114, 134, 137, 144, 164, 166, 168, 176, 181-187, 267, 281-283, 290, 381, 387, 481
 —, Ramchandra 137
 —, Sachindra Prosad 401, 485
 —, Swarnaprabha 308
 Bethune, Drinkwater 17, 19, 106-108, 120, 136, 161, 162, 164, 251
 Bhattacharya, Bhudar 319
 —, Gaurisankar (Tarkabagish) 33, 47-48, 58, 79
 —, Krishna Kamal 262, 385
 Bonnerjee, W.C. 198, 259, 320, 323-325, 349, 358, 377, 412
 Bose, Bholanath 40
 —, Dwarkanath 40
 —, Girish Chandra 444 (Indigo Disturbances)
 —, Harachandra 28
 —, Harimohan 73
 —, Kalachand 29
 —, Shyama Charan 73
 Bramhabandhab, Upadhyaya 233, 343, 448-451

Bysack, Gaurdas 164-166, 182

—, Gobinda Chandra 68, 110

C

Carpenter, Miss Mary 136, 173, 198, 251

Chakrabarti, Phani Bhushan 485

—, Surya Kumar 40

—, Tarachand 27, 29, 49, 58, 60-64, 73, 74, 80, 83, 90, 101, 107, 108, 112, 114, 116

Chandra, Bholanath 100, 158, 159, 318

Chattopadhyaya, Aghorenath 350

—, Bankim Chandra 81, 144, 145, 169, 212, 225-236, 267, 318, 326, 334, 346, 369, 384, 386, 474

—, Nabakanta 330, 331, 428

—, Nagendranath 100, 296, 297, 340

—, Sitalakanta 330, 427, 428

Chaudhuri, Asutosh 436, 437

—, Jogesh Chandra 333, 476, 477

Chunder, Ganesh Chunder 319, 353, 406

Cooke, Miss 17

Cotton, Sir Henry 376, 431

Cowasjee, Rustomjee 29, 31, 34-39, 45, 59, 73

D

Das, Bhuban Mohan 287, 350

—, Durga Mohan 249, 271, 287, 288, 296, 307, 308, 331, 341, 350, 390

—, Gobinda Chandra 410, 411

—, Kalimohan 337

—, Mukunda 425

—, Raj Chandra 31

—, Sib Chandra 29

—, Sundarimohan 282, 341, 352, 409, 484

—, Upendranath 340

Datta, Akshay Kumar 80, 112-116, 129-132, 135, 176, 307, 386, 452

—, Aswini Kumar 411, 423-427

—, Bhanu Chandra 259, 337

—, Debendranath 258, 337

—, Harachandra 121

—, Harihar 25, 44

—, Jogesh Chandra 258, 336-338, 352

—, Mahesh Chandra 73

—, Narendranath (see Vivekananda)

—, Naresh Chandra 259, 336, 337

—, Rajendra 18, 124, 125

—, Rasamay 13, 14, 26, 27, 29-31, 36, 41, 45, 49, 59, 73, 76, 90, 132, 133

—, Sashi Chandra 177-179

—, Srinath 350

—, Uday Chand 73

—, Umesh Chandra 252, 280

—, Upendra Chandra 259, 337

Dattabagish, Shyamacharan 113

Datta Chowdhury, Rambhuj 418

—, Sarala (Debi) 400, 418

Day, Lal Behari 171-176

De, Krishnamohan 7

—, Nabin Madhab 121

—, Ramdulal 30

Deb, Asutosh 41, 58, 59, 64, 73, 115, 124

—, Raja Binay Krishna 294, 365, 377, 385, 464, 479-481

—, Chandrasekhar 45, 59, 62, 72-74

—, Raja Kali Krishna 13, 66

—, Maharaja Kamal Krishna 283, 479

—, Maharaja Bahadur Narendra Krishna 65, 153-157, 247, 254, 292

—, Maharajkumar Neel Krishna 480

—, Pramathanath 59, 73

—, Radhakanta 7, 9, 11, 15-20, 22, 26, 28-31, 36, 42, 47, 113-115, 121, 124, 136, 144, 200, 209, 211

—, Rajendra Narayan 357

—, Sib Chandra 68, 78, 79, 103, 104, 116, 184

Derozio, Henry Louis Vivian 12, 15, 22, 52, 67-70, 75, 78, 85, 87, 93, 95, 100, 104, 107, 111, 124, 167, 201

Deushkar, Pandit Sakharan Ganesh 471, 481-483

Dhingra, Madan Lal 233

Dutt, Isan Chunder 359

—, J.C. 361

—, Michael Madhusudan 18, 81, 141, 145, 158, 164-169, 182, 188, 262, 306, 386, 474

—, Romesh Chunder 130, 179, 228, 359-371, 377, 385, 387, 411, 479-481, 483

G

- Gangopadhyaya, Dwarakanath 90, 100, 249, 287, 288, 293, 296, 306-311, 331, 340, 341, 350, 394, 395, 434, 465, 477, 478
 —, Kadambini 308, 400, 417, 418, 465, 466
 Ghosal, Janaki Nath 417
 —, Kailash Chandra 80
 —, Raja Bahadur Satyacharan 116, 200
 Ghose, Harachandra 68
 —, Rashbehari 300, 316, 352, 414, 423
 —, Sibnarayan 29
 Ghosh, Aurobindo 226, 232, 430
 —, Chandra Madhav, 284, 312, 352
 —, Girish Chandra 122, 154, 162, 197-200, 205-209
 —, Hemanta Kumar 272, 273, 343, 355
 —, Ishan Chandra 147
 —, Kaliprasanna 283
 —, Kashiprasad 41, 59, 71, 72, 114
 —, Lal Mohan 32, 92, 154, 309, 313, 353, 375, 391-394, 412
 —, Manomohan 32, 49, 50, 100, 102, 136, 141, 271, 292, 302-306, 308, 313, 347, 348, 377, 394
 —, Moti Lal 269, 343, 355-359
 —, Nabakrishna 236
 —, Nagendra Nath 368, 404, 405
 —, Ramanath 357
 —, Ramgopal 12, 37, 61, 62, 68, 69, 74, 95, 104, 107-110, 112, 114, 116, 121, 123, 129, 135, 136, 147, 200, 266, 474
 —, Ramlochan 32-34, 46, 81, 302, 391
 —, Shishir Kumar 141, 259, 268-278, 343, 345, 348, 352, 355
 —, Sitanath 282, 283
 —, Srinath 198
 Gokhale, Hon. Gopal Krishna 398
 Goswami, Bijoy Krishna 249, 252, 255, 350, 427, 430
 Guha, Ambu 468
 Gupta, Bihari Lal 259, 360, 362, 364, 371
 —, Iswar Chandra 59, 79-81, 129, 227
 —, Madhusudan 40
 —, Rajani Kanta 282, 373, 384-388

H

- Hare, David 8-13, 16, 25, 29, 47, 49, 54, 68, 72, 85, 86, 90, 107, 160, 172, 181, 242, 386
 Haridasi, Sister (Miss S. E. Waldo) 467
 Heroes of the Indigo Disturbances 439-448
 (Muddun Mohan Bose, Nuffur Doss, Seraj Biswas, Dinu Mandal, Jamir Mundal, Dukhi Sheikh, Hadji Mulla, Kadamulla, Kulin Mundal, Bhikoo Mundal, Juran Mundal, Alam Biswas, Islam Mundal, Manik Shah, Gadu Biswas, Kadir Biswas, Abu Jotedar, Burgatulla, Ishwar Chandra Chowdari, Amir Biswas, Adum Mundal, Jadu Biswas, Biswanath Ghose, Tilok Paramanik, Minu Sheikh, Sabir Biswas, Mirza Mundal, Dudh Mullick, Shadu Sheikh, Ram Charan Biswas, Chaitan Mundal, Karim Biswas, Mandari Biswas, Buddum Mundal, Nussi Joardar, Jalal Mullick, Zirabdi Karigur, Panju Mulla, Andai Kulhu, Astul Mundal, Sikandar Mundal, Joy Chand Paul Chowdari, Bijoyo Govinda Chowdhari, Munshi Latafat Hossain, Mahesh Chunder Chatterjee, Gopal Pal Chowdari, Pran Kristo Pal Chowdari, Joy Kissen Mookerjee, Umesh Chandra Roy, Grihish (Girish) Chunder Bose, Hurris Chunder Mookerjee, Jitr Chatterjee, Iswar Chandra Singh, Bishnucharan Biswas, Digambar Biswas, Mathuranath, Bhattacharya, Sreehari Roy, Banka Behari Mitra, Basanta Kumar Mitra, Kedarnath Ghosh, Asutosh Gangopadhyaya, Priyanath Mukhopadhyaya, Purna Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Bisveswar Mukhopadhyaya, Bhupendra Kumar Roy, Jadunath Majumdar.)
 Heroes of the Santal Rebellion 421-422
 (Kirta Manjee, Bhadoo Manjee, Sunnoo Manjee, Kanoo Manjee, Sedoo Manjee, Chand Manjee, Bhyroo Manjee, Prithee Manjee, Mota Manjee, Nemaee Manjee, Hurcedoss Manjee, Moraree Manjee,

Kumbee, Doorga Manjee, Babooram Soobah, Birmah Thacoar, Dharm Thacoar, Sarkari Soobah, Bhadoo Santal, Johlar Santal, Gooba Santal, Mungta Moonshee, Jibna Paramanick, Boora Santal, Sham Soobah, Rumabae Manjee, Alhar Manjee, Peroo Manjee, Harree Manjee, Champa Manjee, Kamoo Manjee, Bechu Raot Gwallah, Jutoo Rai, Munnoo, Mungla, Chaund Roy, Burrea, Anoo, Samoo, Burha, Luckan, Herma, Humra, Hureea, Baloo, Phaggoo, Modun, Dusumit, Dhusma, Bodhun, Bisoo of Banderpanee, Thukra, Souna, Bisoo of Lukupahar, Puras, Mungal, Haboo, Goomorer, Seetan, Hurmas, Bheem, Soorjee, Kanu of Lukupahar, Gunoi, Pyka, Phagoo and Juggies Sonthal.)
 Hume, A.O. 147, 259, 371, 377, 411
 Hyde East, Sir Edward 9

I

Islam, Seraj-ul 313

K

Khastagir, Annadacharan 307, 341
 Kundu, Gopal Chandra 217
 —, Jadav Chandra 217
 Kavyabisharad, Kaliprasanna 461-464, 483
 Khan, Amir 430
 —, Maulavi Syed Mahommed 260

L

Laha (Law), Durgacharan 65, 154, 156-158, 216, 306
 —, Jay Govinda 323
 —, Pran Krishna 156
 Lahiri, Rajendra Lal 312
 —, Ramtanu 12, 61, 95-99, 124, 474
 Latif, Nawab Abdul 200-203, 260

Long, Rev. James 19, 86, 103, 112, 144, 188, 208, 211, 266

M

Macdonald, Rev. K. S. 353
 Maitra, Akshay Kumar 219, 452, 453, 477, 479
 —, Herambha Chandra 395, 484
 Majumdar, Girish Chandra 237, 238
 —, Harinath 217-219
 —, Pratap Chandra 224
 —, Rajiblochan 218
 Mallick, Birnarasingha 41, 59
 —, Hemchandra 258, 337
 —, Jadulal 157, 198, 216, 311-315, 406
 —, Kashinath 28
 —, Manmathanath 258, 259, 337
 —, Nitto Lal 353
 —, Probodh Chandra 258, 337, 352
 —, Rasik Krishna 10, 12, 59, 62, 68, 69, 73, 75-78, 82, 89, 104, 107, 116
 —, Umesh Chandra 262
 Mehta, Sir Pherozezshah 377, 426, 433
 Mitra, Amritlal 68
 —, Ananda Chandra 341, 409, 410
 —, Digambar 19, 116, 118, 152, 348
 —, Dinabandhu 19, 210, 212, 474
 —, Dwarakanath 140, 219-222
 —, Kali Krishna 161
 —, Kalinath 353, 399
 —, Kissory Chand 19, 50, 75, 94, 116, 131, 149-152, 158, 173, 220
 —, Krishna Kumar 224, 375, 394-402, 484
 —, Madhusudan 73
 —, Nabagopal 100, 186, 204, 213, 259, 267, 280-285, 353, 381
 —, Nabin Chandra 80
 —, Nabin Krishna 161
 —, Peary Chand 12, 50, 60-62, 74, 93, 94, 100-104, 107, 112, 149, 152, 200, 262, 303
 —, Prankishen 80
 —, Radha Krishna 59, 73
 —, Rajendralal 50, 102, 114, 143-149, 151, 153, 164, 263, 303, 381

- , Rajkrishna 271
- , Ramesh Chandra 157, 285, 286, 314, 406
- , Tarini Charan 7, 8, 27, 28
- , Trailokyanath 316
- , Umesh Chandra 286
- Mookerjee (Mukhopadhyaya), Jay Krishna 65, 153, 154, 279, 443
- , Sambhu Chandra 228, 232, 256-261, 272, 337, 352
- Mudalier, S.R. 305
- Mukherjee, Asutosh 300, 344, 378, 398
- , Girish Chandra 282
- , Harish Chandra 116, 148, 151, 152, 168-170, 202, 207, 210, 211, 220, 257, 264, 334, 444-445
- , Iswar Chandra 73
- , Ram Chandra 312
- , Satish Chandra 300, 414, 437, 451
- , Srinath 73
- Mukhopadhyaya, Baidyanath 9
- , Bhudev 18, 97, 158, 164, 187-195, 239, 269, 474
- , Bipradas 319
- , Dakshinananjan 12, 47, 61, 62, 68, 69, 82, 86, 104-106, 112, 123
- , Karunasindhu 319
- , Lakshminarayan 27
- , Raja Pearymohan 279, 406
- , Rajkrishna 100, 331
- , Rash Behari 179, 180
- Mullick, 'Raja' Subodh Chandra 414

N

- Naoroji, Dadabhai 65, 321, 363, 391, 412, 435, 482
- Nivedita, Sister 467, 486

P

- Pal, Apurba Krishna 396
- , Bipin Chandra 226, 243, 282, 310, 317

- 332, 341, 349, 351, 354, 373, 409, 427, 429-436
- , Kristo Das 65, 91, 137, 140, 146, 153, 154, 157, 162, 198, 241-248, 257, 262, 283, 347, 348, 364, 395
- Pal Chaudhury, Bipradas 428, 429
- , Prankrishna 429
- , Surendranath 319
- Pandit, Sambhunath 114, 121, 141, 142, 162, 220
- Paramhansa, Sri Ramkrishna 132, 222, 224, 225, 466, 467
- Paul, D.C. 73

R

- Ramabai, Pandita 417
- Ranade, Mahadev Govinda 275, 434
- Ray, Bhupendra Kumar 396
- , Nikhilnath 478, 479
- Reza, Abu 313
- Richardson, Capt. D. L. 18, 61, 62, 71, 124, 158, 164, 177
- Roy, Chandranath 271
- , Dwijendralal 474-476
- , Govinda Chandra 255, 256
- , Haranath 189
- , Dewan Kartikeya Chandra 474
- , Keshab Chandra 312
- , Mohini Mohan 459
- , Raja Pramathanath 189
- , Radhaparasad 49, 90
- , Rajaninath 307, 340, 341, 350, 390
- , Rajkrishna 388, 389
- , Rama Kanta 483-486
- , Ramaprasad 51, 64, 112, 114, 120-122, 142, 220
- , Raja Rammohun 1-6, 11, 15, 18, 23, 24-28, 38, 39, 41, 43-45, 47, 51, 52, 60, 64, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 78, 111, 120, 127, 138, 150, 181, 226, 410, 432
- , Sarat Chandra 409
- Roy Choudhury, Baikunthanath 45, 49
- , Kalinath 33, 43-46, 59, 73, 81
- , Tarakisore 352, 409

Sanyal, Gopal Chandra 217
 Sarbadhikari, Devaprasad 319
 Sastri, Sivanath 100, 141, 224, 249, 252,
 279, 283, 287, 327, 338-342, 350, 352,
 354, 409, 430, 483
 Seal, Gopal Lal 40
 —, Hiralal 135
 —, Matlal 10, 18, 27, 36, 37, 64, 114
 Sen, Baikunthanath 295, 296, 477
 —, Chandi Charan 325, 326
 —, Girija Kumari 308
 —, Guruprasad 291
 —, Haragobinda 97
 —, Harimohan 18, 82, 84
 —, Harish Chandra 73
 —, Kamala Kanta 486
 —, Keshab Chandra 112, 136, 162, 184, 199,
 216, 224, 248-254, 269, 287, 296, 297,
 308, 330, 340, 341, 350, 382, 413, 427
 —, Krishna Behari 340
 —, Nabin Chandra 81, 244, 245, 278, 344-
 348
 —, Nalini Kanta 486, 487
 —, Narendra Nath 154, 259, 292-295
 —, Nityananda 36
 —, Raj Krishna 74
 —, Dewan Ramkamal 7, 21, 22, 23, 27, 31,
 82, 248, 292, 386
 —, Shyama Charan 74
 Seth, Kalachand 61, 62, 101
 Sevier, Mrs. 467
 Sikdar, Radhanath 12, 60, 68, 69, 93, 94,
 104, 107, 112, 116
 Singh, Upendranath 405
 —, Iswar Chandra 445, 446
 Singha, Kali Prasanna 262-266
 —, Raja Bahadur Pratap Chandra 117,
 135, 200 (see also Indigo)
 —, Sarat Kumar (of Paikpara) 406
 —, Srikrishna 10, 29, 49, 68, 90
 Sircar, Akshoy Chandra 100, 334-336, 405
 —, Rai Bahadur Gangacharan 334
 —, Dr. Mahendra Lal 88, 124, 153, 214-216,
 268, 310, 313, 478
 —, Peary Charan 96, 116, 160-163, 185,

251, 317, 340, 344, 375, 381, 403

—, Shyama Charan (Sharma) 99, 100

—, Umesh Chandra 114

Sukul, Kali Sankar 375, 395, 409

T

Tagore, Chandra Kumar 26, 28, 29, 30, 36
 —, Debendranath 18, 19, 24, 29, 37, 49, 58,
 64, 73, 80, 83, 90, 111-118, 121, 124,
 130, 131, 136, 152, 176, 184, 200, 248,
 249, 266, 280, 283, 289, 380, 417, 454
 —, Dwarkanath 10, 11, 19, 27, 28, 30, 31,
 34, 35, 37-46, 48, 56, 59, 62, 73, 81, 87,
 107, 111, 119, 454
 —, Dwijendranath 136, 266-268, 281, 282,
 284, 352
 —, Gaganendranath 477
 —, Ganendranath 267, 281, 282, 283, 288,
 289
 —, Harakumar 30
 —, Harimohan 30
 —, Hemendranath 380
 —, Jotindra Mohan 144, 146, 157, 266, 313,
 314
 —, Jogendra Mohan 79
 —, Jyotirindranath 187, 267, 283, 379-383,
 454
 —, Ludley Mohan 28
 —, Nandalal 30
 —, Prasannacoomar 10, 14, 22, 25, 27, 28,
 31, 44-46, 49, 51, 53-57, 59, 73, 80, 89,
 117, 120, 121
 —, Rabindranath 81, 118, 138, 144, 149,
 187, 228, 282, 334, 348, 379, 381, 385,
 438, 451, 454-461
 —, Ramanath 29, 48, 50, 102, 111, 120,
 135, 146, 153, 266, 283, 317
 —, Satyendranath 49, 280, 282, 288-291,
 380, 382
 Tarkabachaspati, Taranath 84, 85
 Tarkalankar, Madanmohan 122, 123, 136
 —, Ramjay 27
 Tarkaratna, Ramnarayan 382
 Tilak, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar 268, 323,
 351, 358, 381, 407, 481

Tirthaswami, Hariharananda 23
 Trivedi, Ramendra Sundar 388
 Tyabji, Badruddin 324

V

Vidyabagish, Ramchandra 23-25, 54
 Vidyabhusan, Dwarakanath 125-129, 339,
 461
 —, Jogendranath 100, 326-329, 339, 340,
 373, 381

Vidyalankar, Pandit Gaurmohan 17
 —, Mrityunjy 7
 Vidyaratna, Radhanath 262
 —, Srish Chandra 85, 139
 Vidyasagar, Isvar Chandra 37, 84, 85, 112,
 114, 121-123, 125, 130, 131-141, 144,
 146, 162, 163, 176, 180, 185, 212, 221,
 263, 264, 327, 331, 339, 345, 372, 386,
 406, 474
 Vishram, Fazulbhai 459
 Vivekananda, Swami 200, 224, 225, 448,
 449, 466-473